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Beginning With Pictures

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SIT Graduate Institute

BEGINNING WITH PICTURES

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By

Edward J. Ruggiero

This project by Edward J. Ruggiero is accepted in its present form.

Date July 31, 1985

Project Adviser Bonnie L. Mennell

Project Reader Caleb Gattegno

I wish to thank here my Project Adviser, Bonnie Mennell, Project Reader, Dr. Caleb Gattegno, MAT XIV teachers and classmates and Mexican students from San Cristobal; all of whom provided so much of the inspiration for this work.

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FILE ABSTRACT FORM

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Abstract:

This paper shows how simple drawings were used to teach English to a beginning-level language class. It contains a syllabus outlining the material covered in a ten-week course and reproductions of the pictures with commentary on how they were drawn and used. The main objective in using this type of drawing was to help students find the meaning of language within themselves, as they created it. The effectiveness of these pictures in teaching basic English led to the included in-depth analysis of how humans perceive, the elementary state of mind and viewpoint (as seen in the works of three groups of beginning artists: prehistoric man, children and the American Primitive), how art and language express and communicate, and the affirmation of the value of considering all of these in teaching beginning-level language students.

ABSTRACT

This paper shows how simple drawings were used to teach English to a beginning-level language class. It contains a syllabus outlining the material covered in a ten-week course and reproductions of the pictures with commentary on how they were drawn and used. The main objective in using this type of drawing was to help students find the meaning of language within themselves, as they created it. The effectiveness of these pictures in teaching basic English led to the included in-depth analysis of how humans perceive, the elementary state of mind and viewpoint (as seen in the works of three groups of beginning artists: prehistoric man, children and the American Primitive), how art and language express and communicate, and the affirmation of the value of considering all of these in teaching beginning-level language students.

ERIC descriptors: Limited English Speaking, Visual Learning, Visual Aids, Pictorial Stimuli, Visual Perception, Art Expression, Creative Thinking, Creative Expression.

To my dad

"The Greeks learned to distrust the senses, but they never forgot that direct vision is the first and final source of wisdom. They refined the techniques of reasoning but they also believed that, in the words of Aristotle, 'the soul never thinks without an image.'"[1]

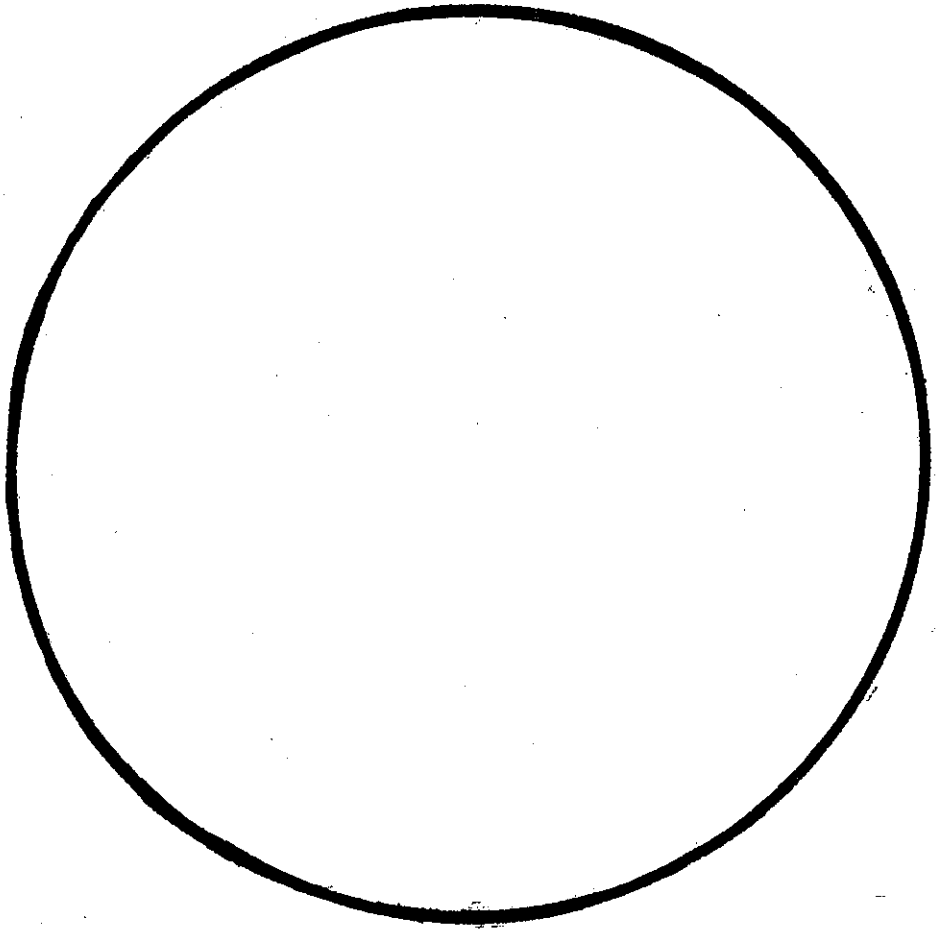


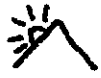
Fig. 1. Collage by the author.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

On January 12, 1983, I walked into the first class of my ten-week ESL teaching internship in the highlands of Chiapas, Southern Mexico. It was a high school class, which I soon found to be of a very beginning level. I said "hello" and there was no response. "Good morning" was received with a few furrowed eyebrows. At the time my Spanish was at a similar level, which ruled out translation. I stood there in front of the silent class--their faces searching for meaning.

What happened next was not only the start of what led to the writing of this paper, but the beginning of a certain way of recreating the meaning of words and sentences that has become an integral part of my approach to this very important part of the teaching and learning of language. I could have written the words on the board but, acting on some inner impulse, I picked up a piece of chalk and drew  , saying "morning," followed by "Good morning." I left the room and upon re-entering a few students greeted me accordingly. I continued with  -"Good afternoon,"  -"Good evening," etc.

There was something primitive about the pictures on the board and what was happening in the classroom as students' eyes lit up with recognition; something dark and mysterious

that echoed the famous caves in France, with their endless walls of myriad ancient images. Thrown into this pre-language situation, without using letters, translation or any of the forms usually used to communicate, meaning was conveyed.

Of course pictures and visual aids for teaching language have been used for years and there are hundreds of them on the education market. Teachers often buy these packets because they do not feel they can draw well enough, or that it is too time-consuming. Many schools and language institutes use these with pride and often have good results. Pictures in general give language greater clarity and authenticity. But it seems unlikely to me that these manufactured pictures can contain the essense of what each individual teacher wants to communicate to each class and student at any given time.

Drawing our own pictures for our language classes helps students better grasp the meaning we want to convey not only because of the keener relevance and consistency, but also as a result of an increased knowledge of the object or concept from the experience of drawing it. If this does not make sense, try drawing something you think you know perfectly well. Imagine the kings in an ordinary deck of playing cards--something most of us have looked at again and again. Draw a simple outline of the one that shows only one eye. . . .[2] There are few of us who can even recall which one this is without referring to the card itself (Fig. 2). Of course this is not such an important image in our day-to-day experience of life, but I believe the inability of most of us to

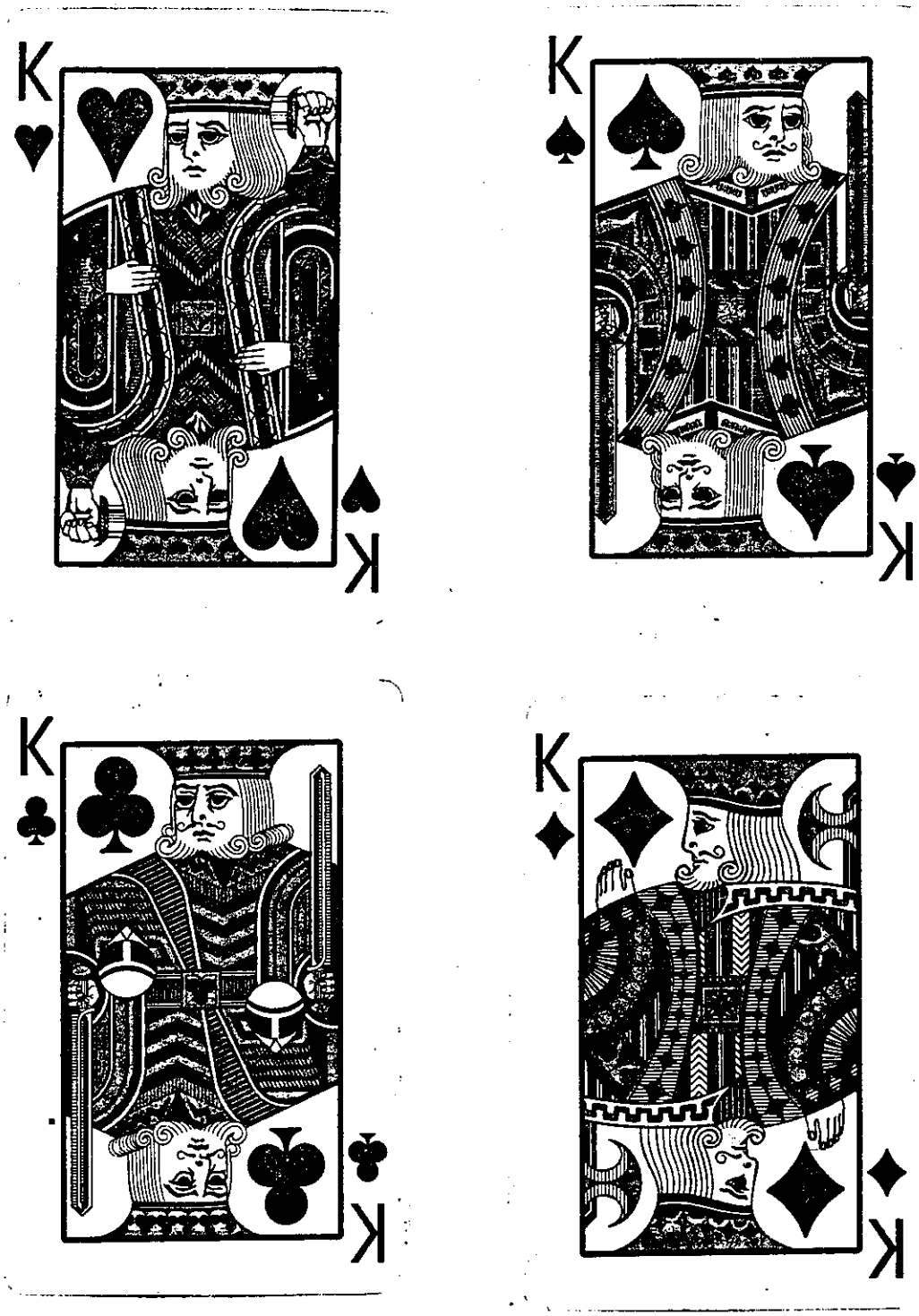


Fig. 2. Playing card kings.

"picture" often extends to even the most commonplace objects--so quickly realized by words. But words are not objects, and often we do not even really "know" what we are talking about. Janet Gaylord Moore describes drawing as

> . . . really a way of perceiving, a kind of thinking. The effort to set down shape, texture and structure makes, I always imagine, a little track in the brain, it leaves a mark like that made by a needle cutting a record, long after the drawing is forgotten. For this kind of drawing, observation and concentration are required; the mind must be at the tip of the pencil.[3]

I am not a trained artist, but by the end of my teaching internship I had drawn over a hundred pictures with which, through various combinations, I taught many more words and structures; the drawing of my students being part of the process. It is my intention in this paper to both share some of this work (the section "Mexico" is devoted to this), and to propose that not only can untrained artists draw their own pictures for teaching and learning language, but that in many ways we beginners are even at an advantage in beginning language classes.

The truth of this paper is that my pictures were successful in teaching English to beginners and the experience led to a study of how and why. As I thought back on my experience in Mexico, I became increasingly interested in the dynamics of what actually happens when one sees a picture, the roles of each component of a picture, the works of other beginning artists and the stages of growth of the artistic persona both on an individual and cultural level. My exploration of these

areas led to the following four sections: "Looking, Seeing, Knowing," "A Look at the Work of Other Beginners," "The Cycle" and "An Art."

In the final section, "Beginning with Pictures," I return to my experiences in Mexico to re-examine what occurred in light of my study of drawing as a form of expression and communication.

My experience of writing this paper has been a fascinating voyage into the world of art as it communicates the story of man. From beginning to "Beginning" I feel I have gone a full circle--the very shape of which becomes a central image in the work itself.

ENDNOTES

[1]Rudolf Arnheim, Visual Thinking (Los Angeles): University of California Press, 1969), p. 12.

[2]Jeffery Schrank, Deception Detection (Boston: Beacon Press, 1975), p. 130.

[3]Janet Gaylord Moore, The Many Ways of Seeing (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1968), p. 73.

MEXICO

Background

My first morning in San Cristobal, I was taken to the Escuela d'Enseñanza, a private high school for girls. As I was escourted into a large, bright and airy Spanish-style classroom I was told I could use this room Monday through Friday, at this hour, and something to the effect of "here's your class--do whatever you want."

It seemed the entire student body plus office staff were there for that first lesson, but it soon dropped down to a core of about ten students: eight girls and two office boys. There were varying numbers of "visitors" throughout the course, but for the sake of time and consistency, I regarded these people as an audience for the most part, including them mainly in the simpler activities that would not hold up those who came to each class. As there were only about a hundred students in the school, people were pretty comfortable with each other and no one seemed to mind who was there.

Besides what I had brought with me: a few ESL texts, tape recorder and music tapes, Silent Way sound color chart, magazine pictures, drawing paper, large index cards, crayons, pencils and my imagination, the large blackboard that got me through that first "Good morning" was the only resource provided by the school.

After those first few pictures described on page 1, I got the idea that we would "draw" our own textbooks and, through another picture on the board, asked my students to get a notebook with unlined paper. We decided to meet an hour a day (officially--I hoped we would be able to do more but did not want to push yet, as they were coming on a voluntary basis), five days a week. The next week we began doing an extra hour on Mondays and Fridays.

That afternoon, I began developing the concept for teaching and learning language almost entirely through pictures. I had had good results using pictures before in teaching very basic English but this was only for single random vocabulary words. I decided to devise a set of pictures that could be combined to make sentences and recombined to make new ones (the "building blocks"), all of which in turn could be arranged and rearranged in varying contexts (the "context pictures").

I had had great success in the past with students drawing as a reinforcement mode of learning. It was a way of offering them another outlet for expression--an additional channel for the visual mode as well as the audial and verbal. I have always believed that the more channels open through which students can be actively involved in their learning, the more meaningful the experience and the more permanent their retention.

When a student "reads" and draws a picture, rather than being given only an abstract word, the corresponding concept

(beyond the translation) is brought out of him. This takes a slightly different form in each student and the end result is uniquely his own, as he knows it. It is something he has discovered within himself and can take out to use again and again now that he knows where it is.

Once this connection or recognition has occurred, the technical aspects of pronouncing, reading, spelling and writing this new meaningful sound can be worked on.

How I Drew and Used Pictures

I had never had to rely entirely on pictures to teach a language course, so set as my main criterion in designing each image, simply the ability to most easily communicate the concept.

This often meant a close observation of the environment to be sure of which images I might see in a way too differently from that in which my students were used to seeing them (I go much deeper into how we see and how differently people see in the section "Looking, Seeing, Knowing").

This, to be sure, was no great task as this largely indigenous area, remote and far up in the hills of Chiapas, was so full of beauty and color that I spent much of my time walking and doing exactly this kind of observation. In fact, most of the drawings were done outdoors in some natural setting--on a bench by the church on the hill--on a stone wall near the Indians' rainbows of woven cloth to sell. I guess I worked best relaxed in these peaceful, timeless settings.

My main objective was to convey not the whole object in detail, but some inner structure or essence that I really felt I knew; something that would most clearly hint at or trigger an association within the student before I gave the word. In this way, the student would connect the object or concept with not only the bare sound of a word, but a meaningful image; created for the most part, by herself--as she found it within.

In my survey of various drawings, I have since found that many of the works done by beginners themselves are most effective in bringing about such results in communicating through pictures for a variety of reasons which I go into in the section "A Look at the Work of Other Beginners."

The way I drew the pictures was partly "as they came out" and partly decided. I started with the barest outline shape, drawn with a heavy black line. Conveying the part of the image that best evoked what I felt to be its essence took priority over correct proportion or perspective. Then I filled it in with a single solid color. I used a different color for each picture in a set mainly to aid in remembering which sound went with which picture.

I chose colors that I felt reinforced the concepts. If you think about it, once you get an image in your mind, there is often a corresponding color for it, as a "red apple." But this often varies from person to person. In their own drawings, my students often used different colors and shapes. I have since realized that these, although often subjective,

are important choices as they entail actual physical and emotional reactions to not only the image itself, but these elements of which it is composed.

Although it did not occur to me at the time, I have since had the idea of choosing colors for like-sounds as well as concepts, as an aid to remembering the words for the pictures. For example, using loud, warm, heavy or advancing colors for words with a lot of consonants and softer, cool, light or retreating colors for words with a lot of vowels.

Lines, shapes, colors and their arrangements can be given meaning and often already have certain meanings, subliminal as they may be, which may be taken into account in the students' perception and reproductive arrangements of pictures. I have included the section "An Art" to hopefully provide some enlightenment regarding roles of the components of drawings themselves and how each individual will naturally express more or less effectively through different ones--just as every artist works better through some mediums than others.

Whenever I brought a new picture into the class, or used old ones in new combinations, there was always a time for students to first see and recognize before going on to the language.

This was always a time of quiet excitement and I felt it important, as in many moments during teaching, to back off while the students were doing their work. Observation of that easy-to-spot light of recognition in their faces was my main

task during this time--as it was just at this moment that I would say the English word, so to associate and bind it with the image they had just seen for themselves.

Of course every student would not always immediately connect with the image and again, in this case, the question marks on their faces were usually unmistakable. It was something similar to that double-image of an old and young woman in the same picture; there are always some people who just do not see it. And just as this happens, there are always some people who are anxious to help--even if with a translation. Although I did not encourage translation, I felt that a picture, an English word and a Spanish word all gelling into a single concept at once was still more meaningful than word to word in bare letters.

Next we would go on to combining these words into sentences, which were in turn combined into the structures we were learning to use. The pictures, at this point, were something to get the conversation going; ultimately leading to students conversing on their own.

For example, the lesson on weather would begin with the already-known picture

 (It's an apple)

SS say "It's an apple"

T covers

SS say "It's"

TT shows 

SS "see" weather

T says "weather"

SS repeat

T shows 

SS "see" sunny

T says "sunny"

SS repeat

T combines  and 

SS say "It's sunny"

T points out the window and asks "What's the weather today?"

SS say "It's sunny"

T shows  etc.

_____ SS work together with all the pictures.

The pictures I have included are of course smaller than those I used in my classes, which were usually on 5X7 unlined index cards and often in duplicates of varying colors and arrangements (for example a red  = I, where a blue  = me). By making them smaller here, I am able to include more.

I designed my syllabus (page 15) in a way that there would be a simple progression in which, like the pictures I used, there was a constant building onto learned material rather than too much starkly new material. I planned to spend roughly a week on each unit but intuitively paced the classes according to the amount of time students needed to get the material, which of course varied. We did finish the ten units in a smooth progression over the ten weeks.

Some of the material may seem scanty for a full week, but it often took much longer than I expected. As long as I felt the students were giving their all, I let them take the time they needed--and once they knew the structures, what they had learned was usually quality over quantity--a theme which, due to lack of outside pressure to cover a fixed syllabus in a fixed time, was somewhat new in my teaching. I liked this.

Mexico Syllabus

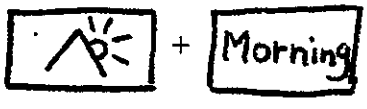
Unit	
1. Greetings	-subject pronouns -verb- to be (contracted form) -who, what, this, and
2. Alphabet	-articles -colors -this/that, these/those -verb- to give (imperative) -direct object pronouns
3. Weather	-it's -verb- to be (past tense) -verb- to like -how about. . . -review
4. Questions/Short Ans. Ordinal Numbers	-verb- to have + auxiliary- do -some/any -how many?
5. Parts of the Body Sickness	-possessive adjectives -verb- to touch (imperative, pres. cont.) -song "Head Shoulders Knees and Toes" -review
6. Clothing	-verb- to wear (present cont. + aux. be) -possessive pronouns -colors, cont. -how much? -song "Colours"
7. Cardinal Numbers Days of Week, Months Holidays	-there are -review
8. Family	-there is/there are -'s possessive -song "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands"
9. The Home	-verb- to live -verb- to be born -where, when -prepositions of place
10. In the Park	-review

The Building Blocks

The main feature of the "building blocks" was that once the corresponding language was learned, they could be combined to let students get new phrases or sentences and re-combined in the "context pictures" which, as the name implies, were for language in a larger context. The following activities and methods for using the building blocks were employed throughout the entire course.

Cards were usually passed out for students to practice responses according to the picture on the card they held, things becoming less controlled as they became more familiar with the structures. Listening comprehension could be worked on and tested by passing out the picture cards, then calling out (gradually students themselves called out) the words or phrases and having the student (or students) hold them up, showing them to the class or bring them to the front of the room. Further practice was given in activities such as the "drawing dictation," where students drew what they heard.

Pronunciation was worked on and vocabulary reviewed with the Silent Way sound color chart (Educational Solutions, Inc.). Usually I pointed out parts of a word, phrase or sentence students had already learned, sometimes leaving it unfinished for them to guess the rest.

For reading practice we often played concentration, where students matched the pictures with the corresponding word which was written on another card, eg., 

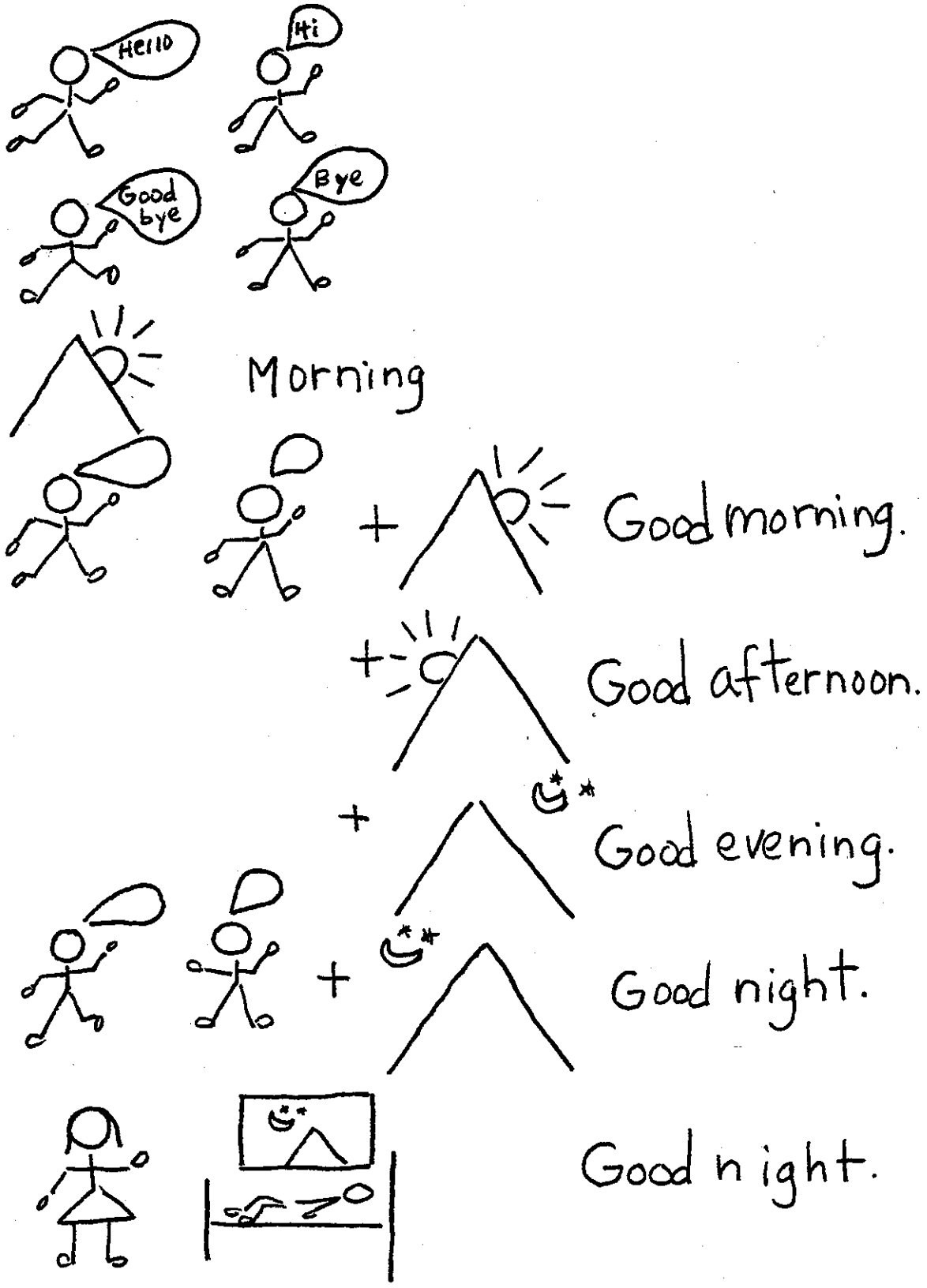
.

For writing practice, the drawing dictation was done in reverse, eg., I showed a picture or pictures and the students wrote the word, phrase or sentence. Reading and writing were often combined in assignments and tests, where students were to draw the picture for the words and vice versa, eg.,

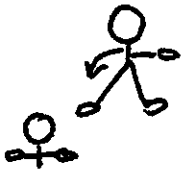
1. morning- 
2.  - night
3. to meet- 

I am including activities and techniques with the pictures I used to teach the structures of each unit. The reader will notice that I always worked from answer to question in introducing structures, which I felt to be an effective method of playing to the success of the students.

Unit 1. Greetings

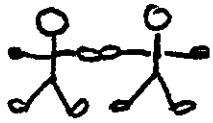


I (later used for me, my and mine in different colors)
I'm ____.
Hello, I'm ____.



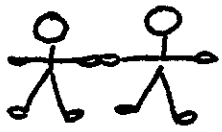
You
You're ____.

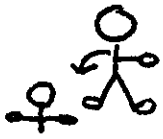
happy
Pleased
glad



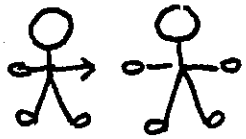
to meet

happy
Pleased
glad

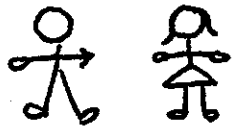




I'm glad to meet you.

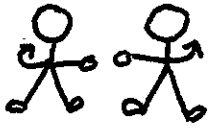


He
He's ____.
This is ____.
Who's he?
Who's this?

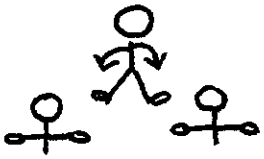


She
She's ____.
This is ____.
Who's she?
Who's this?

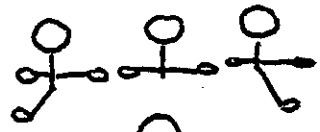
It
It's an apple.
What's this?



We
We're ____ and ____.



You
You're ____ and ____.
Who're you?

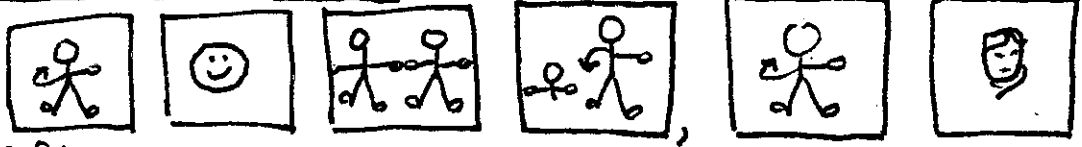


They
They're ____, ____ and ____.
Who're they?
Who're you? etc.

Verb Conjugation was practiced by Combining these Pictures with different verbs.

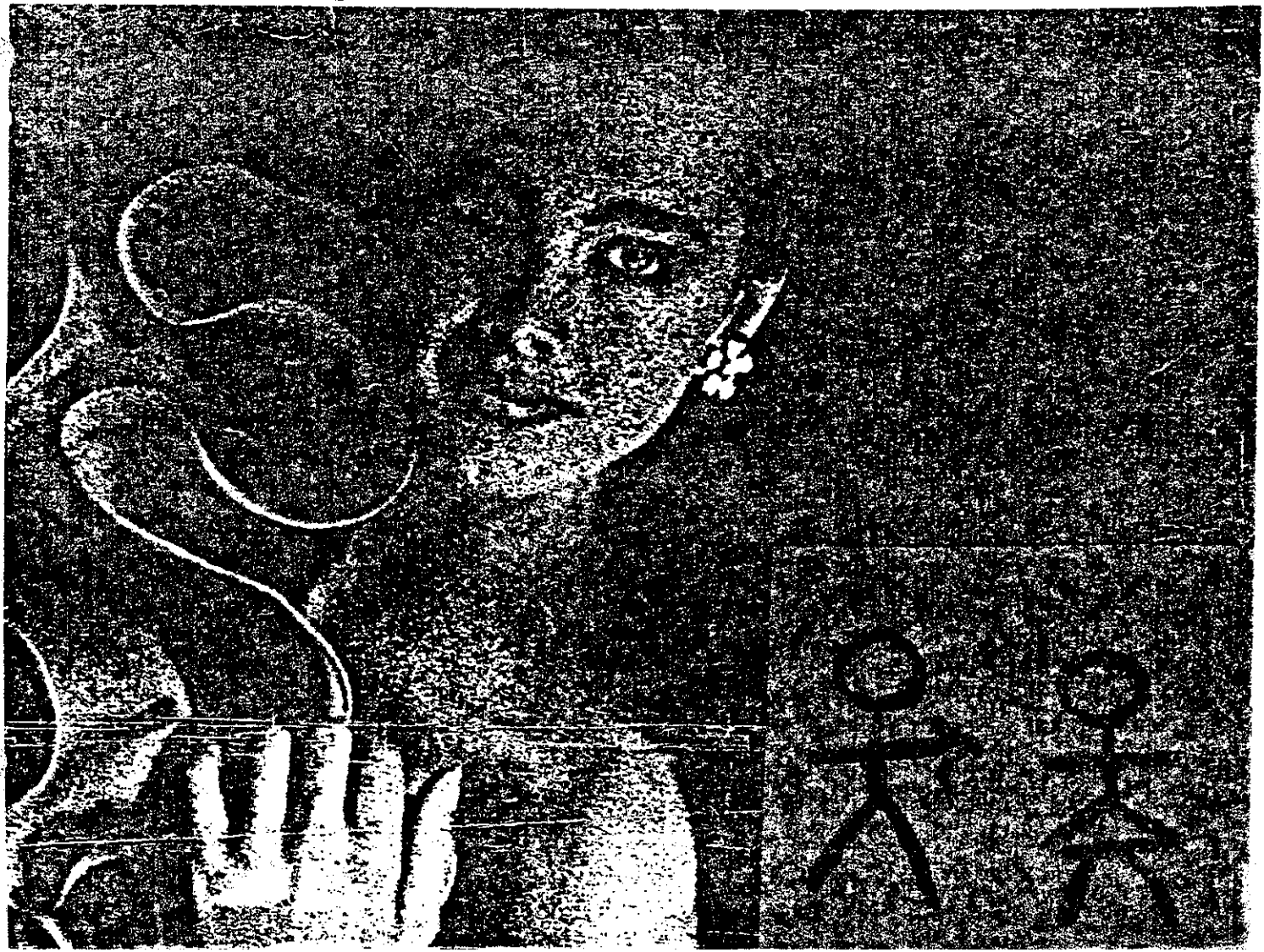
After Combining Pictures to make sentences for introductions, further demonstration can be given by Combining Separate Pictures with magazine Pictures, Staging a meeting that students will be able to "read" for themselves, e.g.,

A: 

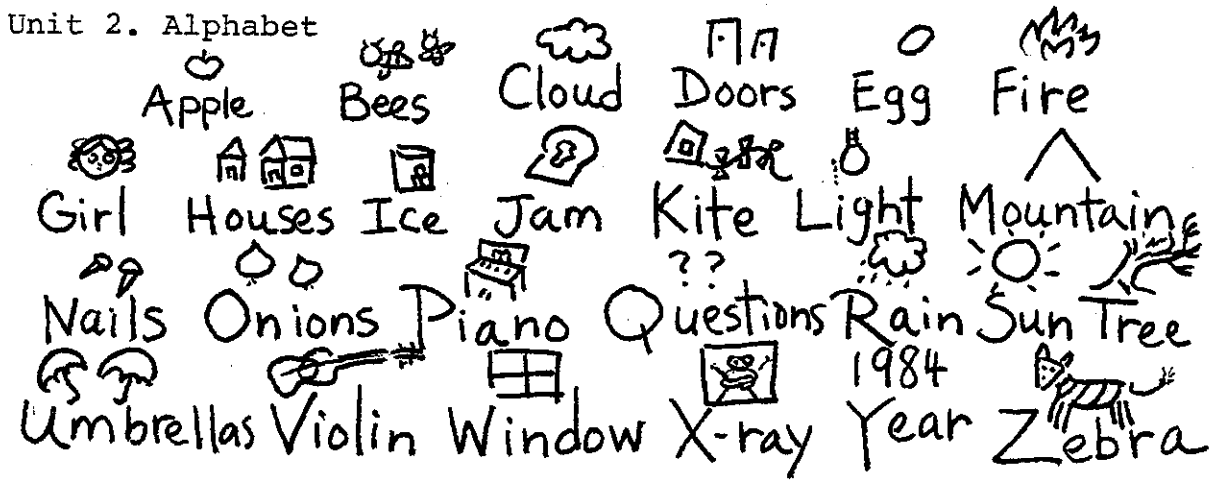
B: 

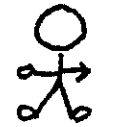
after practicing in Pairs, Students can introduce themselves to the class, then Continue with asking "who's she?", etc., and introducing each other with "this is . . .", etc.

"She's Brooke."



Unit 2. Alphabet




this apple It's an apple. What's this?


that apple It's an apple. What's that?

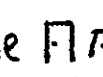

these bees They're bees. What're these?


those bees They're bees. What're those?

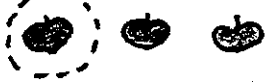

me, etc.

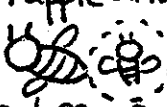
Please give me this apple.
Please give him those bees, etc.

- Practice, Putting Cards near and far.

the  the  the  the  the 

an  a  a  a  an 


an apple an apple an apple


a bee a bee

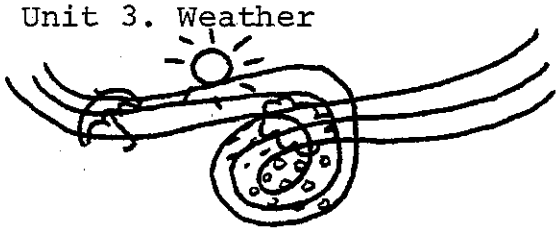
the red / yellow / green apple

the big / small bee

Please give me an apple.
Please give me the red apple.
Please give me the small bee.

- Practice with Picture cards → students' drawings → real objects.

Unit 3. Weather

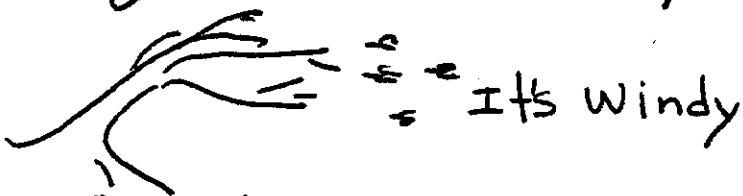


Weather

Review sun, etc.
It's sunny.

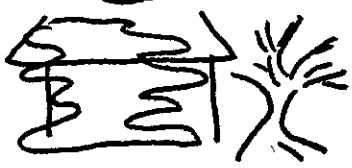
It's cloudy

It's rainy



It's windy

It's snowy



It's foggy/hazy

It's hot
It's warm
It's cold

1/15 - Today Today is Windy. It's Windy. What's the Weather Today ?

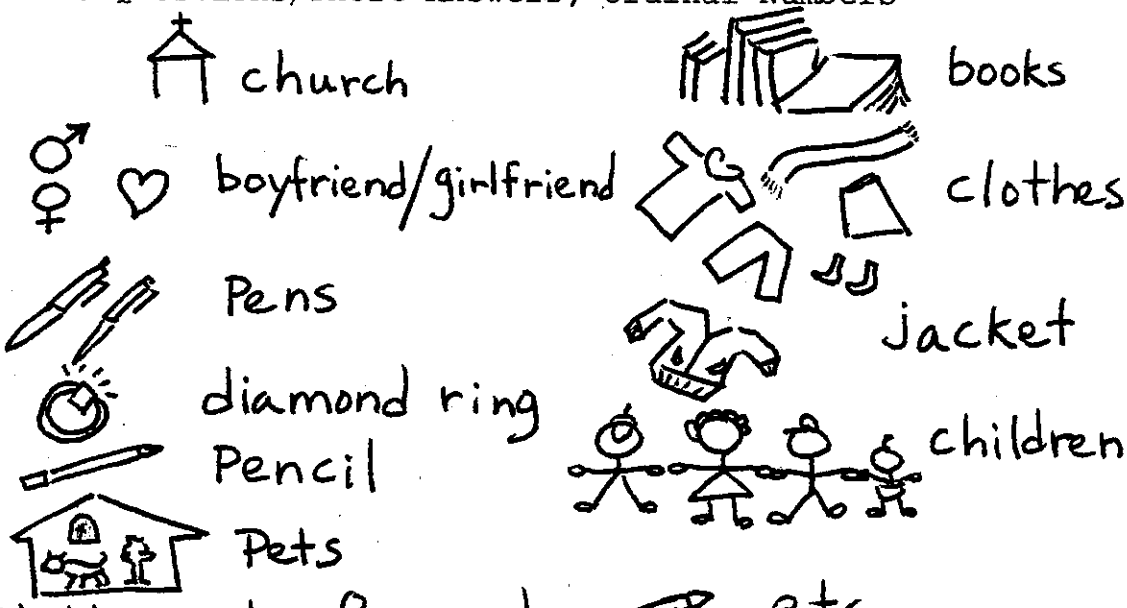
1/14 - Yesterday Yesterday was Cold. It was Cold. What was the weather yesterday?

♡ - like

How about you?
→ free practice.

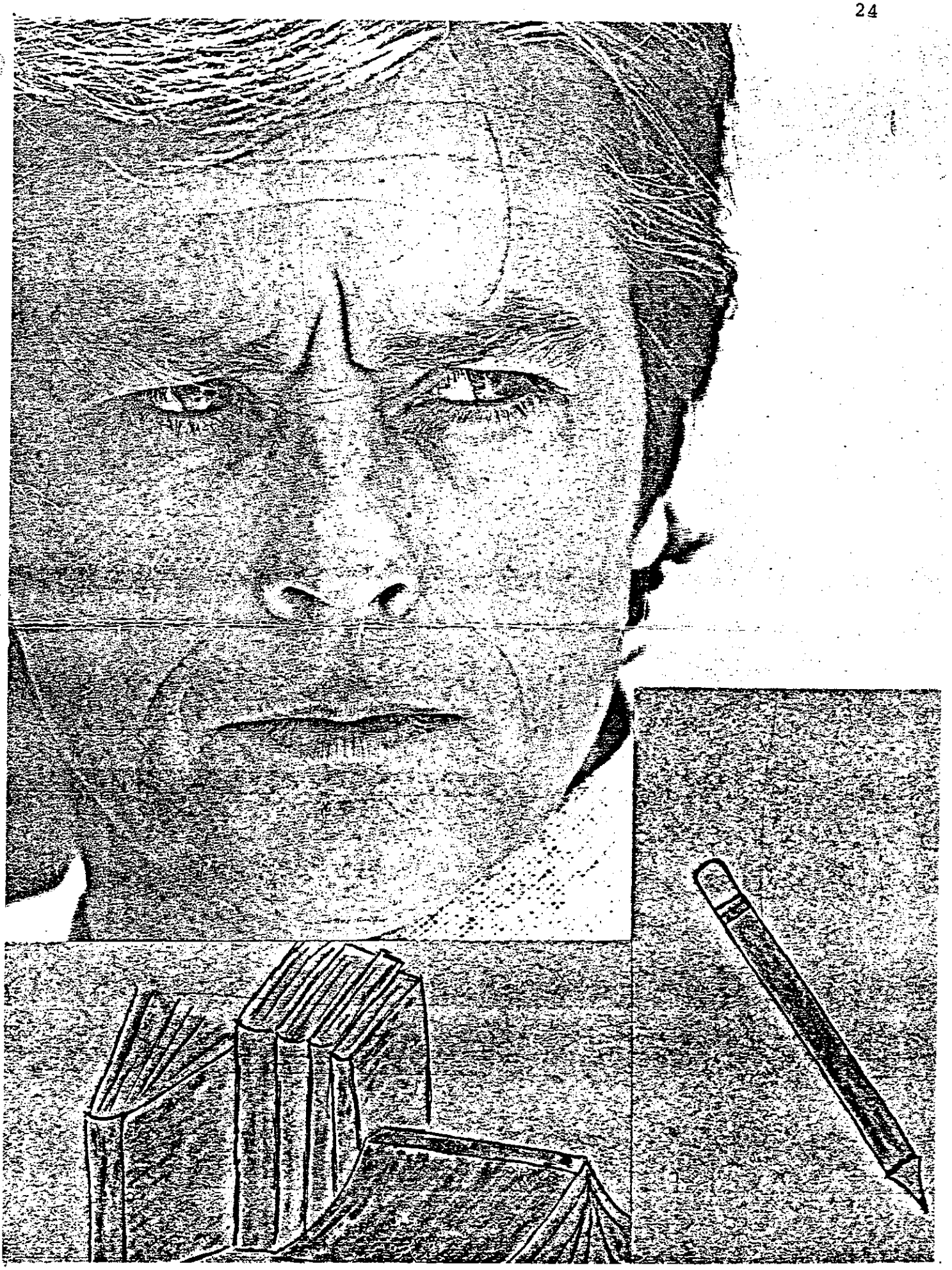
Students "draw" weather they like / dislike.

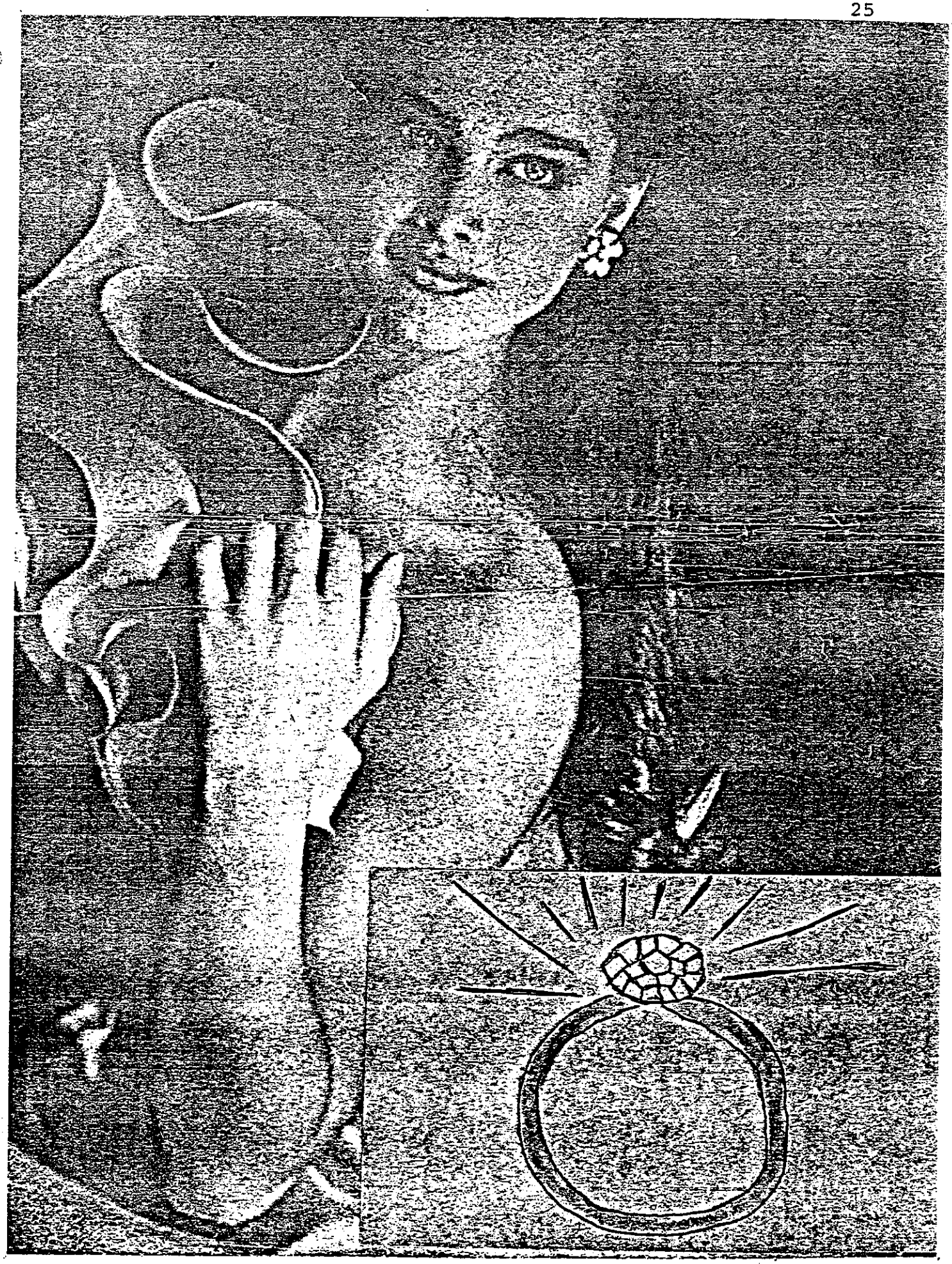
Unit 4. Questions/Short Answers, Ordinal Numbers



- Hold cards  and  , etc.
  I have a pencil. I don't have a church.
  I have some pens. I don't have any children.
- Pass out cards.
  What do you have?
  Do you have any Pens? Yes, I do / No, I don't.
  Do you have a pencil? Yes, I do / No, I don't.
  → free practice (without pictures)
- students practice → game - guess what card I have (use all Pictures from beginning of course).
- Combine cards with magazine Pictures (see examples), and ask, eg.; "what does Alain have?" etc. → students practice together asking each other what they and other students have.
- Ordinal numbers - Combine cards with magazine Pictures, eg, Alain has six books
  He has six.
  How many books does Alain have?

Students ask each other how many ___s they and other students have → free.
Students "draw" something they have → free practice.






Larson

Unit 5. Parts of the Body/Sickness

 - my, etc.

No need for preliminary pictures to teach parts of the body, as there are plenty of the real thing around. After pointing to these and verbally "titling" them, recall and deepening of the learning of them can be worked on with games like "Simon Says" and the song "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes." Possessive adjectives can be worked on by giving students a pointer and saying "touch his head," etc., with students eventually taking over and directing. After enough of this, the class can construct their own group representation part by part on the board--I have since come to call this "the monster." The teacher dictates parts one by one as different students draw them. When finished, the teacher titles each part for learning written representation. The teacher can then let the students draw and title part by part. This is a good time to go into sickness.

head
headache
I have a headache.
What's wrong?

stomachache

earache

backache

toothache

cold

sore throat

I'm fine.

she has a headache. What's wrong with her head?
- Students mimic sickness and ask each other What's wrong.
- Students "draw" how they feel and ask each other "How are you", etc.

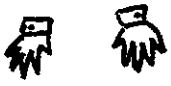
Unit 6. Clothing


shirt


Pants


dress


hat


gloves


belt


Sweater


Shoes


Socks


Pajamas

I'm wearing a shirt.
Are you wearing a shirt? Yes, I am/
Are you wearing shoes? etc. No, I'm not.
He's wearing socks. What's she wearing?, etc.

- As usual, first let students create new sentence.
I'm wearing a red shirt. It's red.
What color is your shirt?, etc.

— song "Colours"

— $ dollars ¢ cents - add price tags

It cost $10.00. How much does this shirt cost? etc.
Students can combine price tags and pictures (also magazine pictures), then price items themselves, making their own price tags. Can also teach here "that's a good price," "what a bargain," "Thats too expensive," etc.

— 
mine, etc. Review all pictures from course.
Is this/that your __? Yes, it is/No, it isn't.
Are these/those his __s? Yes, they are/No, they aren't.
Whose __ is this/that? It's hers.
Whose __s are these/those? They're ours.

— Students draw what they and others are wearing → free practice.

Unit 7. Cardinal numbers, Days of Week, Months, Holidays

— Hang a large calender at the front of the room with pictures on the holidays with which students would be familiar drawn in the box of their date, e.g.,

 Christmas  Easter

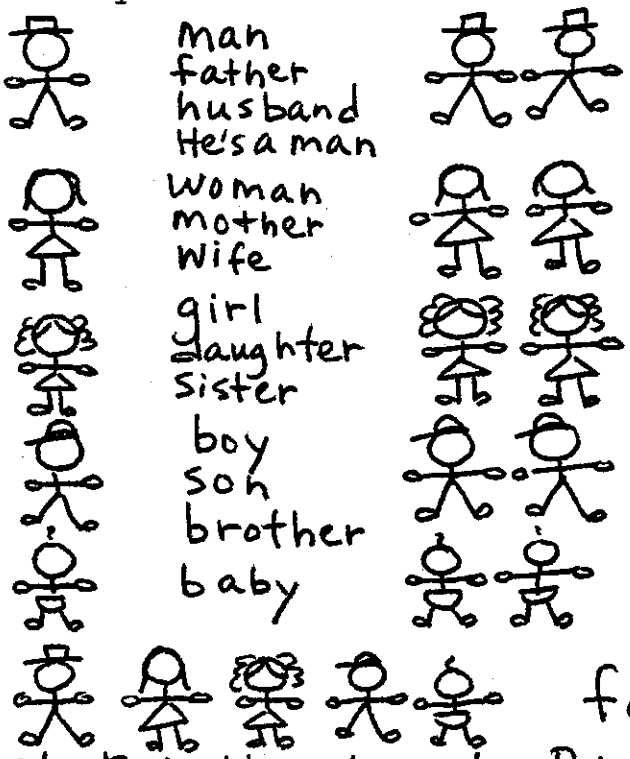
 Valentine's day  Thanksgiving, etc.

Day - Month - Year What day is it?, etc.
There are seven days in a week.
How many days are there in February?, etc.
How many months are there in a year?

— Cardinal numbers
— Students write their name in the box on the day they were born.
My birthday is February eighth.
When's your birthday?
When's ____'s birthday? → students practice
— Christmas is on December twenty-fifth.
When's Valentine's day?

Students can draw pictures of holidays in their Country in the box on the day they take place and practice asking
when's ____ this year?
It's on day, month date.
Students "draw" holidays they like → free practice.

Unit 8. Family



- Teach relationships by Pointing from one card to another, the order in which you Point indicating the relationship, eg., from  to  = He is her father.
- "I'm a man." Point to a student eliciting the same. Point to another, and back to the first eliciting "he's a man," "*they're women," etc.
- *There are ten people in this class. How many People are there in this class? How many men?, etc.
  There are five men.
  There are five women.
  There are five men and five women.
- There are five people in my family. How many People are there in your family?
  They are my father, mother, etc.
  My father's name is ___. what's your father's name?
  There are five people in my family.
  *Their names are ___, ___, etc. What are their names?
- Song "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands."
- students "draw" their families → free practice.

* differences between They're, there are and their need to be given special attention.

Unit 9. The Home


Sofa

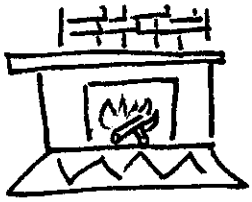

Curtains

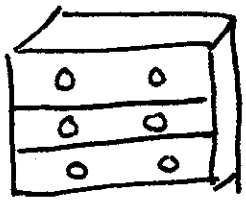

bathtub

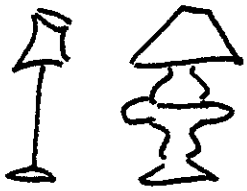

rugs


beds


toilet


fireplace


bureau

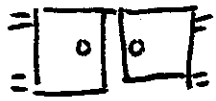

lamps


refrigerator


Sink


Chairs


table


Cupboards


furniture

Review with Cards

I have a Sofa

what do you have?
Do you have a ____?
Is this your ____?
whose ____ is that?
How many ____s do you have?
How much does this ____ cost?
Please give me the ____.

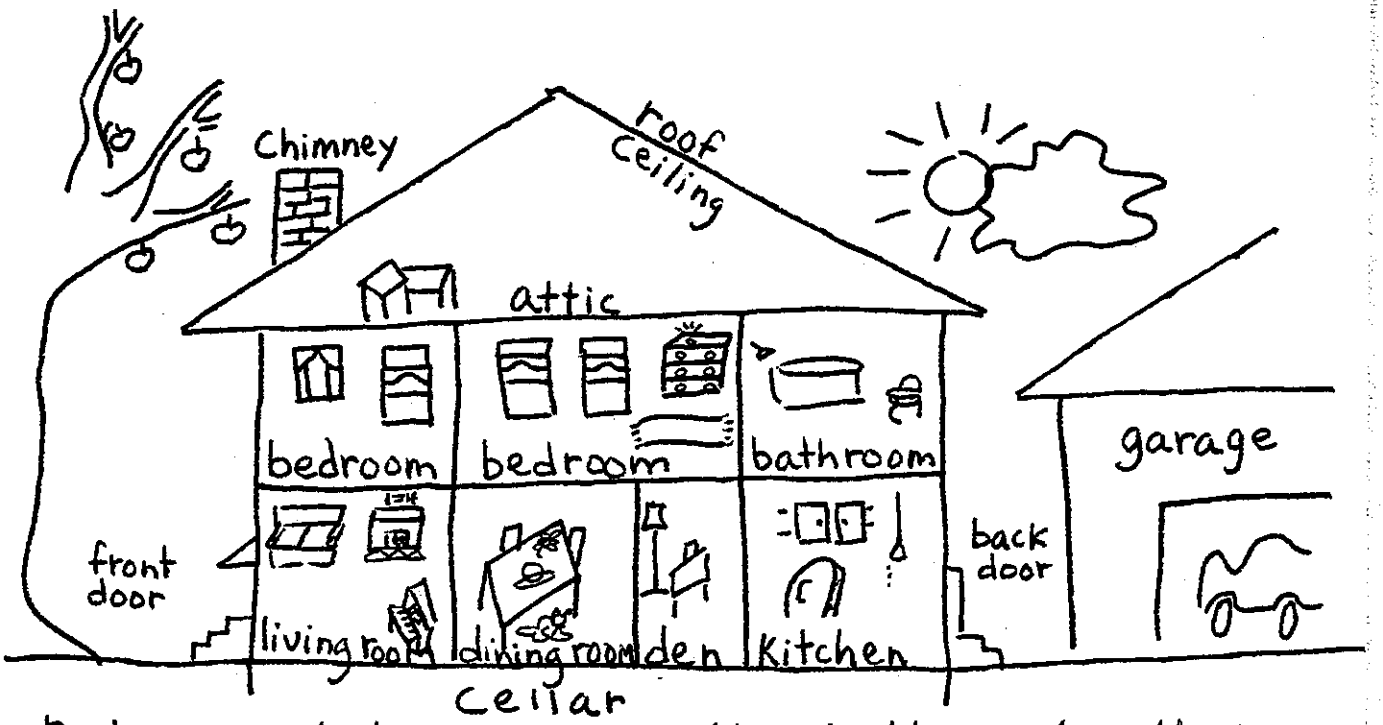
students draw their own pictures → free practice

Two Context Pictures

I live in city/town.
on street.
at number.

"Every person, all the events of your life are there because you have drawn them there; what you choose to do with them is up to you."1

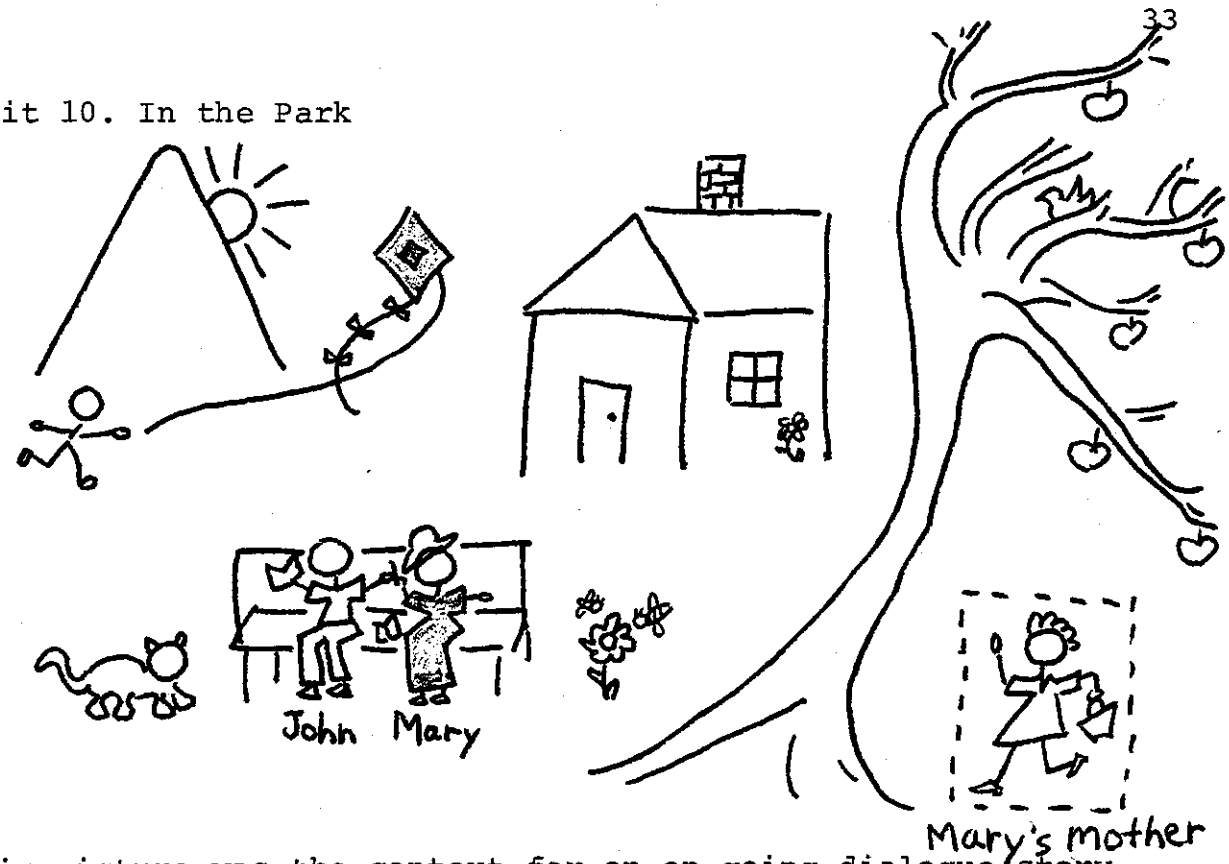
Where do you live?
Where were you born?
When were you born?



- review vocabulary - what's this, is there a/are there any ___s in this house? How many?, etc
- living room - The piano is in the living room. where's the fire place? etc.
- There's a hat beside the flower on the table. where's the cat?, etc.

After the rooms and prepositions of place have been mastered, further practice can be done with a large picture of an empty house (identical to the one above) on a table with small pictures (cut in outline) to be placed in a certain part of a specific room. Zeroxed sheets of the outline can be passed out for drawing dictation, eg., "draw ____ in the kitchen." The same outline can be drawn in large size on the board for a "free for all fill-in" (which leads to the most interesting results). Finally, students can draw and describe their own homes to the class.

Unit 10. In the Park



This picture was the context for an on-going dialogue/story that continued throughout the course, a few lines at a time. This activity served as a general review of vocabulary and structures learned, a chance to practice them in a "larger picture" of language and as a framework within which students could use language more creatively by discovering new combinations of the building blocks as needed for expression; as it is context which gives meaning to reality. While I recited the dialogue, I played a light, airy piece from Phillip Glass' "Glasswork" to enhance the feeling of a windy day. After going through the dialogue once, I asked questions while referring to the picture. The questions were added to in concurrence with new structures learned, for example, "What's this? What color is the cat? Is it evening? What's the weather? How many people are there in this picture? How many boys? What're their names?

Where are they? What is John wearing? What does he have? What's wrong with Mary? Where's her brother? What's in the tree? How many apples are there in the tree?" By pointing to parts of the picture and then to students, I tried to encourage them to ask questions like these to each other. After students repeated the dialogue once again, I gave them copies of the dialogue and they practiced substituting the boxed parts. Here also, work can be done with a big picture and outline shapes of objects to be arranged into it. Finally, the students were to draw the scene, adding to or changing events as they wished (and hopefully according to what they needed/wanted to work on) and tell the class about it . . . as they pictured it.

In the Park

John: Excuse me, do you have a pen?

Mary: Yes, I do. Here.

John: Thank you.

Mary: You're welcome. My, it's windy today (sneeze).

John: What's wrong?

Mary: Oh, I have a cold. . . . What's your name?

John: I'm John.

Mary: I'm pleased to meet you, John. My name's Mary.

John: Nice to meet you, Mary. Do you live in San Cristobal?

Mary: Yes, I do. And you?

John: I'm from Mexico City. It's really windy this morning.

Mary: Yes, it is, but I like windy days. I feel excited.

John: Whose cat is this?

Mary: It's mine.

John: What's its name?

Mary: Its name is Niki.

John: Oh! Look at the kite! . . . It's yellow and green--like your dress.

Mary: Yes, it is.

John: Your dress is beautiful.

Mary: Thank you.

John: How old are you?

Mary: I'm seventeen.

John: When's your birthday?

Mary: October seventeenth. When were you born?

John: February eighth, 1954. How many people are there in your family?

Mary: Four: my mother, my father, my younger brother and myself. That's my brother in front of the mountain.

John: Oh. . . . . Are you busy this evening?

Mary: No. . . .

John: What's your address?

Woman: Mary!

John: Is that your mother?

Mary: . . . . . .

This dialogue served both as a form of review and testing; as we had no grades, the two served the same purpose--aids to learning--something else I liked.

The students' ability to substitute and expand on this,

as well as their success in rearranging and substituting building blocks in the context pictures indicated that the material had been learned, remembered and most important, understood in a way that they could use it.

Although the students did not always connect with every picture I used (the only way to find out which ones to weed out), more often than not, the viewing and reproduction of these images, both pictorially and verbally, resulted in a deeper, more permanent learning than I had ever witnessed in one of my language classes.

As I have mentioned, I have always believed in the importance of a deep involvement on the part of the students which in some way enables them to actually "create" what they are learning, as they are learning it. In this sense, learning truly can be a form of "recreation."

I cannot say that I know exactly what was occuring in Mexico regarding this aspect of teaching and learning language through pictures. My interest in this has resulted in the remainder of this paper.

ENDNOTES

[1]Richard Bach, Illusions (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1977), p. 144.

LOOKING, SEEING, KNOWING

```
        S   P    S
        E   E  K E
LOOK--EXPERIENCE
          C  O
          E  W
          I
          V
          E
```

Look carefully

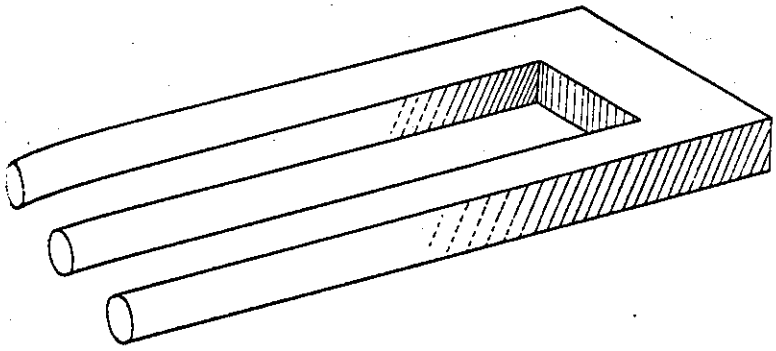


Fig. 3. Optical illusion.

What do you see?

Now recall the process you just went through.

What were you doing?

What were you thinking?

What did you see?

Human beings have been intrigued by visual perception for centuries. In Plato's Timaeus we find one of the earliest analyses where he asserts that

> The gentle fire that warms the human body flows out through the eyes in a smooth and dense stream of light. Thus a tangible bridge is established between the observer and the observed thing, and over this bridge the impulses of light that emanate from the object travel to the eyes and thereby to the soul.[1]

According to Rudolf Arnheim, "visual perception is visual thinking."[2] In order to perceive an object, we must be able to find "a sufficiently simple, graspable form in it."[3] The simpler the object before us, the sooner we find a form we can perceive. If the object is more complex, after examining every aspect, we may single out and highlight a particular quality. As with the ambiguous figure on page 38, perception often involves a form of problem solving.[4]

I chose such a figure to accentuate the active concern of the mind in visual perception; the "inner work" of making that connection which distinguishes "looking" from "seeing." Although both looking and seeing begin with sense perception, the former usually ends at this point. Early in life we learn to look at the world and label its phenomena in terms of what is advantageous to us on various levels--the first and most basic being our survival.[5] We usually "look" into things no more than we need to. But the word "seeing" should be understood as meaning not only the mirror work of the retina, but a much deeper perception by the mind.[6] Perhaps the way we feel

after looking carefully at this impossible figure (a very embodiment of confusion), and laboring over the construction of a bridge across which it can "enter our soul" is a form of "seeing."

In my search for a single term that best conveys what occurs at the moment one finds a "graspable form"; what enables one to "know," I have often come upon the concept of recognition. Arnheim explains that

> Visual knowledge acquired in the past helps not only in detecting the nature of an object or action appearing in the visual field; it also assigns the present object a place in the system of things constituting our total view of the world.[7]

According to Van Dyke, "the complete act of seeing requires a mental recognition of what is seen."[8]

I believe that recognition is an essential part of looking, seeing and knowing, but in a more literal sense of the word--to "re-cognize." To understand the term in this sense it is helpful to go back to the beginning of life and ask "How do we recognize the very first things we see? With what do we begin the construction of our world view?" I have dealt with the practical business of looking, but how do we learn to see, to know, to "cognize"?

Animals are said to possess inbred responses to certain shapes, colors or movements called "visual releasers."[9] It has been determined that these regulate instinctual behavior, such as the red spot which has developed at the end of the lower mandible of the yellow bill of the herring gull.

The parent delivers food when the chick pecks, but if this spot is missing, the chick does not peck.[10] Another example is the pattern of the petals of flowers leading to nectar which is built into the bee's brain. Those without it die for lack of honey. These animals rely almost entirely upon unlearned perceptions of objects, but their perceptual range is much smaller than man's.[11] They can not "see" as man can.

The workings of the human mind are not so easily explained and although I do not claim to be able to do so, I believe that the concept of "re-cognition" holds some powerful clues. I believe that the very first time we looked, saw and knew (the nature of the latter two functions being the feature which separates man from animals lower down on the evolutionary scale), we "re-cognized" by "re-creating" in a way that only the human mind does.

Babies begin to form their "total view of the world" from the moment they leave the darkness of the womb. With the process of their own creation being their only experience thus far, it seems natural that they would begin operating in such a way from the moment their minds and eyes enter the visual context of this world. Knowing nothing, they can only begin to make something of it all by re-creating everything they experience until it makes "sense"; looking and seeing being among the subjects they must master in order to know.

Their way of perceiving contains the essentials of Arnheim's theory of all perception being a search for a

"simple, graspable form," etc. The difference between these just-beginners in life and those who have lived longer is that their "total view of the world" is almost completely without context and content. From the start, there is a need for humans to visually create these for themselves and this can be seen in various universal archetypes in the mind of man (a few of which I will later discuss). Many of us allow these first creations to influence all later ones, or even become our total view of the world in themselves. Although we can not live our life in the state in which a child begins, we can continue to experience the essentials with the unadulturated vision of a newborn by re-cognizing things as we did so early in life.

We can recognize what we "look" at, to fulfill our needs, our selves, and we can re-cognize by re-experiencing the cognition of the original creator. This re-cognition is a sharing of a timeless moment--a participation in the essense of something which is, and always will be. To take part in this on-going re-creation is to experience fully, and, in the words of John Dewey, "Experience, like breathing, is a rhythm of intakings and outgivings."[12] We come to know what we see because it is, in part, our own creation. We are of the same stuff as what we see and vice versa. We all saw in this way at one time and it remains at the core of every person's being.

There is, however, a need for agreed-upon views of the

world for communication and the sharing of experience. The primal nothingness takes different shapes on various levels, separated further by time and space. Seeing in the elementary way I have been describing is a way of understanding other ways of seeing, and there are many. In the words of John Berger, "Every image embodies a way of seeing" and "our perception or appreciation of an image depends also upon our way of seeing."[13]

Our total view of our part in and of the world is inevitably influenced by the experience of all we have seen and over time plays a major role in the formation of our own way of seeing. On an individual level this is partly a result of circumstance and partly where we have chosen to look.[14]

> The experienced physician, mechanic, or physiologist looking at a wound, an engine, a microscopic preparation "sees" things the novice does not see. If both, expert and layman, were asked to make exact copies of what they see, the drawings would be quite different.
> . . . The expert and the novice see different things, and different experts see differently also.[15]

Not only do individuals perceive differently, but on an even more unconscious level, people of different geographic areas and cultures learn to see differently according to their surroundings.

Ready for another experiment?

1) Which of the two horizontal lines is longer?

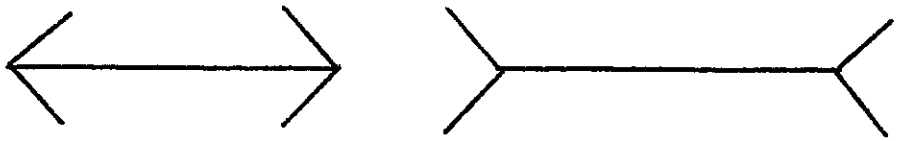


Fig. 4. The Müller-Lyer (arrow) illusion.

2) Which of the two lines in each pair is longer?

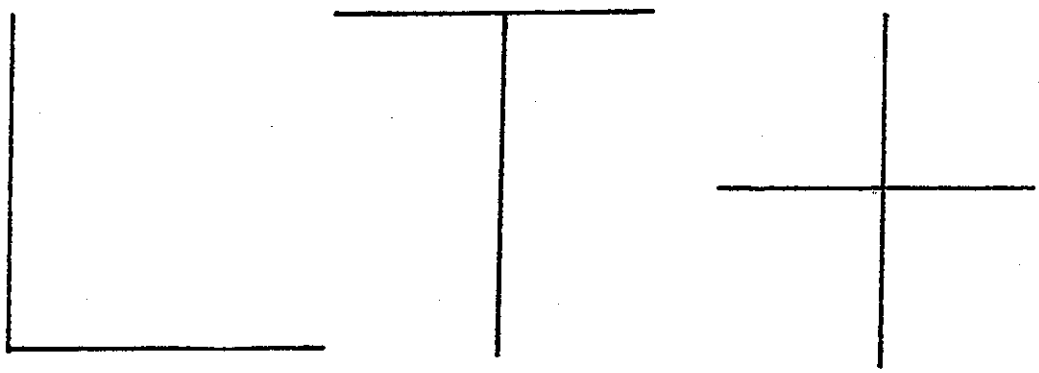


Fig. 5. The horizontal-vertical illusion.

1) They are both the same length.

2) The vertical in all three.

Using these two geometric illusions (Figs. 4 & 5) among several groups of people in the Torres Straits and in Southern India, W.H.R. Rivers investigated the possibility that persons in different parts of the world might be susceptible to different perceptual illusions. Data were also collected among English adults and children for comparison. With sufficient data for statistical analysis of the inter-group differences, Rivers concluded that the non-Western groups were more subject to the horizontal-vertical illusions than were the English groups.[16]

Rivers speculated that the illusions of compared horizontal and vertical lines belonged to a group of illusions which depend on physiological conditions. Those who had more experience in civilized life were less effected. The explanation for the Müller-Lyer illusion is more psychological and although many were affected, it occurred more with those subjects with greater experience in the civilized world. Rivers explained the non-literates being less subject than the English men to this illusion as a difference in the direction of attention; the savage attending more strictly to the two lines he was asked to make equal while the civilized man allowed the figure to exert its full influence on his mind.[17]

A basic problem for those involved in the study of

perception is determining what is given and what is learned--what can be called experience and what can be called behavior. According to Marshall H. Segall, "For all mankind, the basic process of perception is the same; only the contents differ and these differ only because they reflect different perceptual inference habits."[18] The formation of culturally differing perceptual inference habits can be examined on various levels.

The Physical Environment of Peoples Hypothesis purports that the presence or absence of broad, horizontal vistas is crucial in shaping the visual inference habit that leads to horizontal-vertical illusion susceptibility. The degree to which one becomes subject to the tendency to infer long, frontal plane, horizontal distances from short vertical retinal images depends upon the opportunities one has for looking at horizontal expanses.[19]

Regarding our experience with the man-made objects of our visual experience, the Carpentered World Hypothesis considers experience with two-dimensional representations of reality.[20] As a result of our squared environment and homes of rather detailed interior, Westerners have become more prone to illusions like the Müller-Lyer. Compare the structures Westerners grow up looking at to those of the Zulus (Fig. 6).

> Their world has been described as a circular culture--their huts are round and have round doors; they do not plough their land in straight furrows but in curves; and few of their possessions have corners or straight lines. . . . It is found that they do experience the arrow [Müller-Lyer] illusion to a small extent, but

Fig. 6. Zulu huts showing a "circular culture."

> they are hardly affected by the other illusion figures.[21]

There are sundry other classes of experiences more likely to occur in some cultures than others, as well as the infinitely differing ones of each individual. And more than any other form of expression, art will clearly show the differences in our ways of seeing. Compare the flat, shadowless world of the Chinese painting (Fig. 7) to the deep, detailed view of the Western one (Fig. 8). Are there not aspects of both that you can "re-cognize"?

Art, language and culture are so interwoven that to deal with any one of them totally disconnected from the other would be impossible. Every picture indeed tells a story and we listen to it with our eyes. If we look long enough, we notice certain pictures actually seem to be . . . alive.

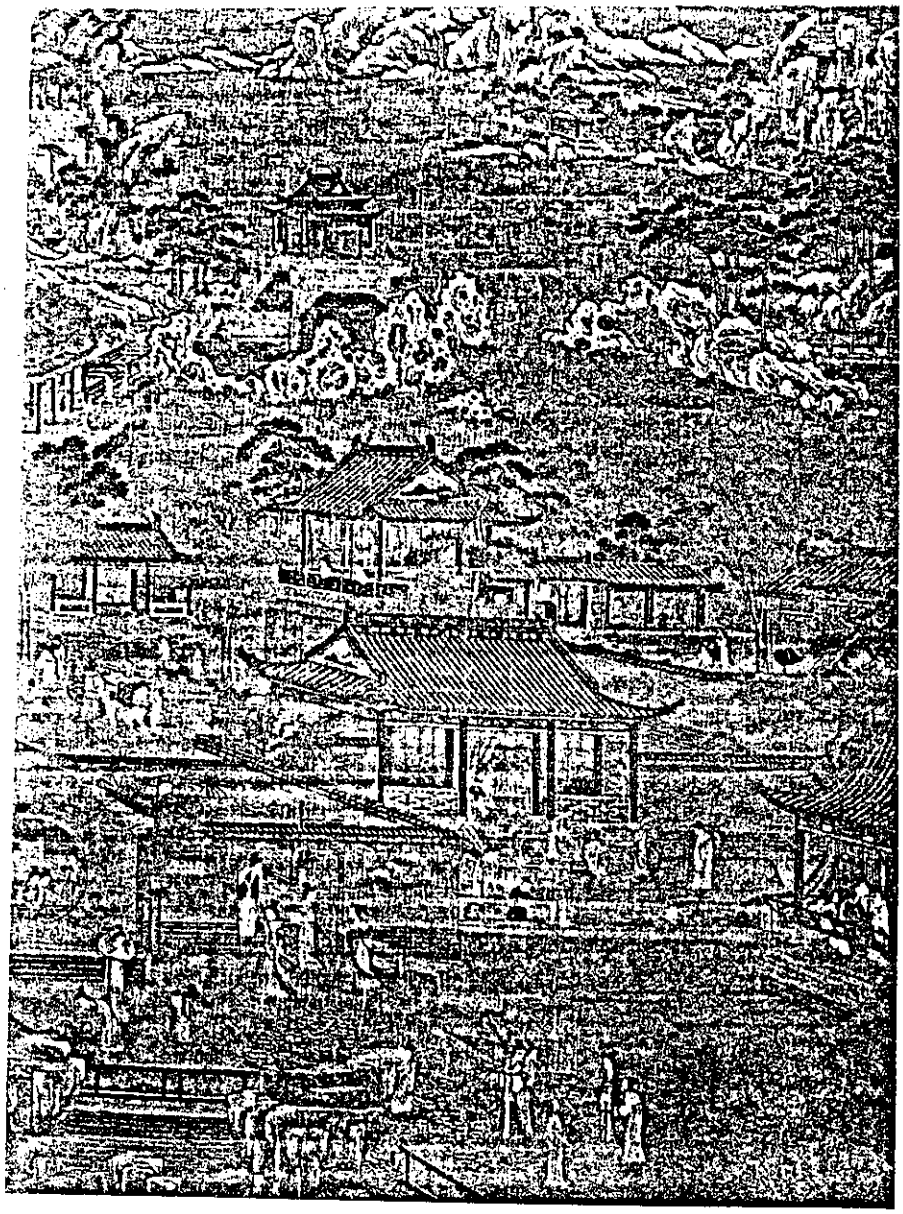


Fig. 7. Example of Chinese perspective.

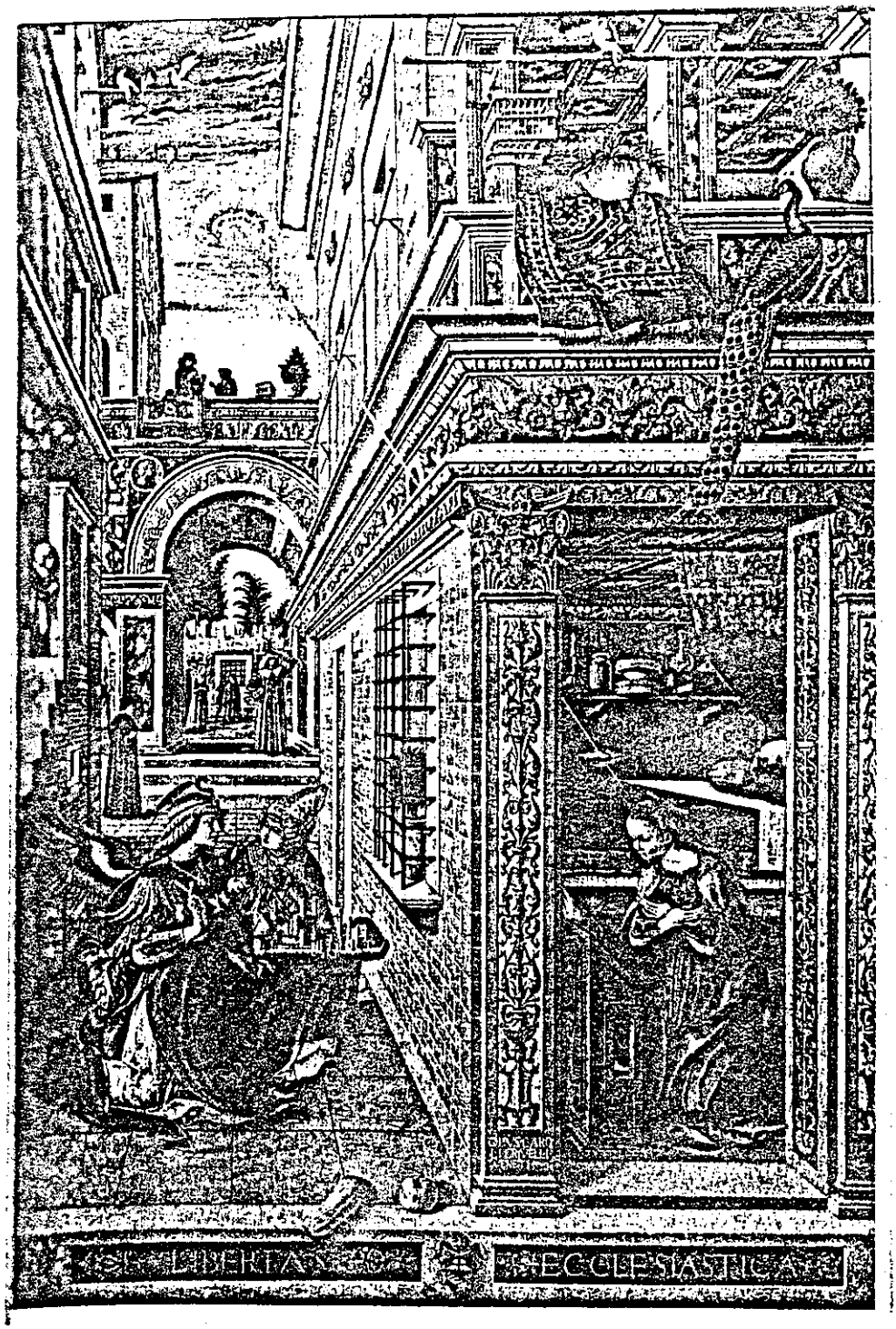


Fig. 8. The Annunciation by Crivelli (c. 1430-95).

ENDNOTES

[1]Plato's Timaeus as quoted by Rudolf Arnheim, in Visual Thinking (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), p. 19.

[2]Arnheim, p. 14.

[3]Arnheim, p. 257.

[4]Arnheim, p. 37.

[5]Jeffery Schrank, Deception Detection (Boston: Beacon Press, 1975), p. 135.

[6]Van Dyke, Meaning of Pictures (New York: Charles Scribner's sons, 1903), p. 60.

[7]Arnheim, p. 90.

[8]Van Dyke, p. 60.

[9]Arnheim, p. 28.

[10]Arnheim, p. 23.

[11]R. L. Gregory, Eye and Brain (London: World University Library, 1969), p. 193.

[12]John Dewey, Art as Experience (New York: Minton, Balch and Co., 1934), p. 56.

[13]John Berger, Ways of Seeing (London: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 10.

[14]Arnheim, p. 301.

[15]Arnheim, p. 301.

[16]Marshall H. Segall, The Influence of Culture on Perception (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1966), p. 63.

[17]Segall, p. 65.

[18]Segall, p. 213.

[19]Segall, p. 212.

[20]Segall, p. 212.

[21]Gregory, pp. 14-15.

A LOOK AT THE WORK OF OTHER BEGINNERS

Lacking formal training, the knowledge of established conventions and prescribed ways of seeing regarding the subject at hand, beginning artists and language students are, in many ways, in a similar position. Starting with nothing, beginners are freer to re-cognize and re-create what they see in a way that what they produce is at once closer to the elements comprising the more complex pictures of life and entirely their own.

The effectiveness of my "primitive" drawings in communicating basic ideas to beginning-level language students inspired me to take a look into the caves themselves. I also felt there was something to be learned from the drawings of children--our truest beginners, and finally, the slightly more up to date "American Primitive."

It is my hope that visiting the worlds of these artists will bring the reader back to the experience of the elementary stage . . . back to basics.

Prehistoric Art

The art of some of the earliest cultures of the human race appeared in Europe at the end of the last Ice Age, about thirty thousand years B.C. Reaching an amazingly accomplished peak in the famous cave paintings of South-Western France

and Northern Spain about twelve thousand B.C., it spread throughout Africa, Northern Asia, North and South America and Australia.[1]

As hunters, the interests of prehistoric man were focused on the animal world and their most typical form of expression was in animal representation--primarily of the reindeer, bison, wild horses and cows on which their existence almost entirely depended (Fig. 9).

According to Van Dyke, the decorative sense is the very first sign of the art instinct in primitive man; this arose through the "play impulse" and "art in its early significance was merely the result of man's superfluous energy" and "innate delight in form and color."[2]

Rene Huyghe further explains the source of the aesthetic impulse as a "need to impose an order on things which one's mind can grasp and respond to."[3] Scratches primitive man made on the bones of animals whose flesh he removed and ate went in all directions. The desire to order them led first to a technique of repetition. Eventually the "Law of Diversity in Nature" caused a resistance from man's sensibility, which, "having a closer connection with life than the intellect has, rebels against monotony"; thus, the discovery of symmetry (Fig. 10), "an opposition within the unit (like the right and left of the human brain)."[4] All of this led to the engravements on objects made of bones perhaps in an attempt to claim as his own the animals primitive man had devoured.

Fig. 9. Cattle, "Bovidian" Period (c. 5000-12000 B.C.).

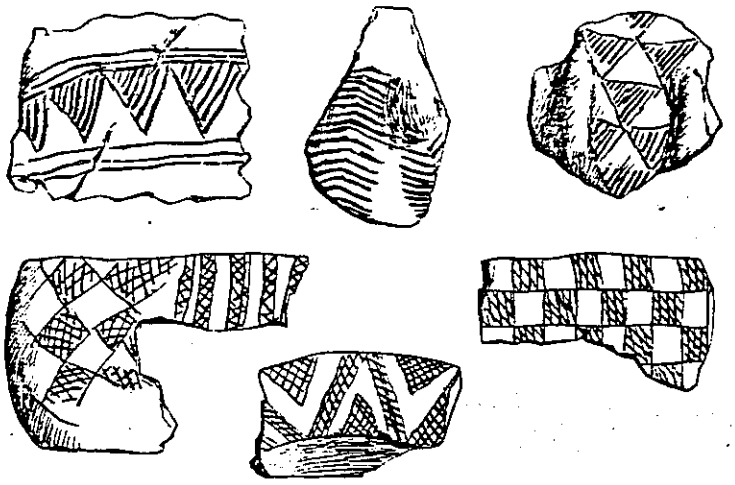


Fig. 10. Patterns on Neolithic jars (Camp de Chassey, Saone-et-Loire).

According to Professor Giedon, the cave paintings began as developments of suggestions on natural objects (Fig. 11). Certain rock formations evoked animal images that primitive man believed to be the actual spirits of the animals they resembled. As in an actual hunt, painting such visions, while giving them further realism, allowed the artist to "catch the ghostly visitant before it disappeared."[5] Ideas seem to have been associated freely and drawing around such shapes with line and color was a way of containing what they represented. According to Graham Collier, ". . . This [drawing around the shape] accomplished, the vital life force of the animal is trapped and the hunter has gained some power and control over the creature's destiny."[6]

As there are many paintings without this basic rock formation, it follows that prehistoric man eventually discovered that he could do without such accidental suggestions--that he could create--which must have resulted in an even stronger sense of possessing the essence of the animals that gave him life.

We can gain further insight into the mentality behind the art of primitive man by observing those who are still living outside of civilized society (Fig. 12). There are groups of people in Africa who are just as vague about what is picture and what is real; on one occasion, when a European artist made drawings of a tribe's cattle, one native remarked "If you take them away with you, what are we to live on?"[7]

Fig. 11. Standing horse in red (Altamira).

Fig. 12. Australian native drawing a totemic opossum pattern on a rock.

E.H. Gombrich suggests a few activities that, if performed in absolute honesty with ourselves, along with increasing our understanding of primitive art on various levels, show that we too retain something of the "primitive" in us.

> Suppose we take a picture of our favorite criketeer or film star from today's paper--would we enjoy taking a needle and poking out the eyes? Would we feel as indifferent about it as if we poked a hole anywhere else in the paper? . . . However well I know with my waking thoughts that what I do to this picture makes no difference to my friend or hero, I still feel a vague reluctance to harm it. Somewhere there remains the absurd feeling that what one does to the picture is done to the person it represents.[8]

Gombrich attributes the often weird appearance of much prehistoric art not to a standard of craftsmanship which is different from ours, but to different ideas; "The whole story of art is not a story of progress in technical proficiency, but a story of changing ideas and requirements."[9] Further elaboration is given to this in an example where Arnheim explains that

> To the primitive, food is the carrier of immaterial powers or forces whose vitalizing virtue is transferred to the eater. Disease is not caused by the physical action of germs, poisons or temperature, but by a destructive "fluid" emitted by some hostile agency. It follows that, according to the primitive, the specific appearance and behavior of natural things, from which we gather information about the physical effects they are likely to have are as irrelevant to their practical function as the shape and color of a book are to the content it conveys to us. Thus, for example, in the representation of animals the primitive limits himself to the enumeration of such features as limbs and organs and uses geometrically clear-cut shape and pattern to identify their kind, function, importance and mutual

> relationships as precisely as possible. He may use pictorial means also to express "physiognomic" qualities, such as the ferocity or friendliness of the animal. Realistic detail would obscure rather than clarify these relevant characteristics.[10]

For examining our reaction to the often strange appearance of primitive art, Gombrich proposes another experiment.

> Take a piece of paper, or ink blotter and scrawl on it any doodle of a face. Just a circle for the head, a stroke for the nose, another for the mouth. Then look at the eyeless doodle of a face. Does it not look unbearably sad? The poor creature can not see. We feel we must "give it eyes"--and what a relief it is when we make two dots and at last it can look at us! To us all this is a joke, but to the native it is not. A wooden pole to which he has given a simple face looks to him totally transformed. He takes the impression it makes as a token of its magic power. There is no need to make it any more life-like--provided it has eyes to see.[11]

If the experiments thus far have had no effect, any of us need simply recall to mind a special image of or by a loved one we possess, be it a painting or photograph, and the treatment we give it, regardless of the technical proficiency that went into creating it. In the words of Graham Collier,

> It is a mistake to think that modern man is a rational creature. While it is a mark of primitive man to respond directly to the non-logical and less-rationally defensible images projected by the psyche, similar primitive or elemental responses lurk behind the civilized facade of which we are so proud.[12]

It is a similar love prehistoric man felt, not only for the animals he drew, but for all of nature, for life itself. But looking at many samples of prehistoric art, it is obvious that it was not meant to be just something pretty to look at-

-but something powerful to use in various ways. I believe this art goes far beyond the decorative and even many of the practical purposes that have been assigned to it. It has been analyzed into magic, religion, and even the recording of events. The engravings on the long baton of reindeer antler (Fig. 13), upon close inspection, with various signs (the salmon, seal, grass snake, roots, first leaves, branches and budding flowers) actually tell the story of the coming spring. In this sense, image-making in these early civilizations was also the first form of writing, as pictures and letters can be said to be "blood relations."[13]

In another sense, there is a deep meaning in the creation of many of these ancient images that is below the level of written or verbal communication. They are often found painted haphazardly on the walls of hidden caves, far from dwelling areas. "The use of such secret places for the performance of ritual or magic is prevalent in many cultures throughout history, suggesting that an archetype is at work here."[14] Consider the walls of temples and churches today.

One can only speculate as to exactly what occurred in these caves and there are various rather convincing theories; any or all of which could be true.

Rarely are human figures found and they are never rendered with the naturalism of the animals (Fig. 14). Although they do sometimes appear killing the animals, from what I have presented thus far, one could assume that they felt they

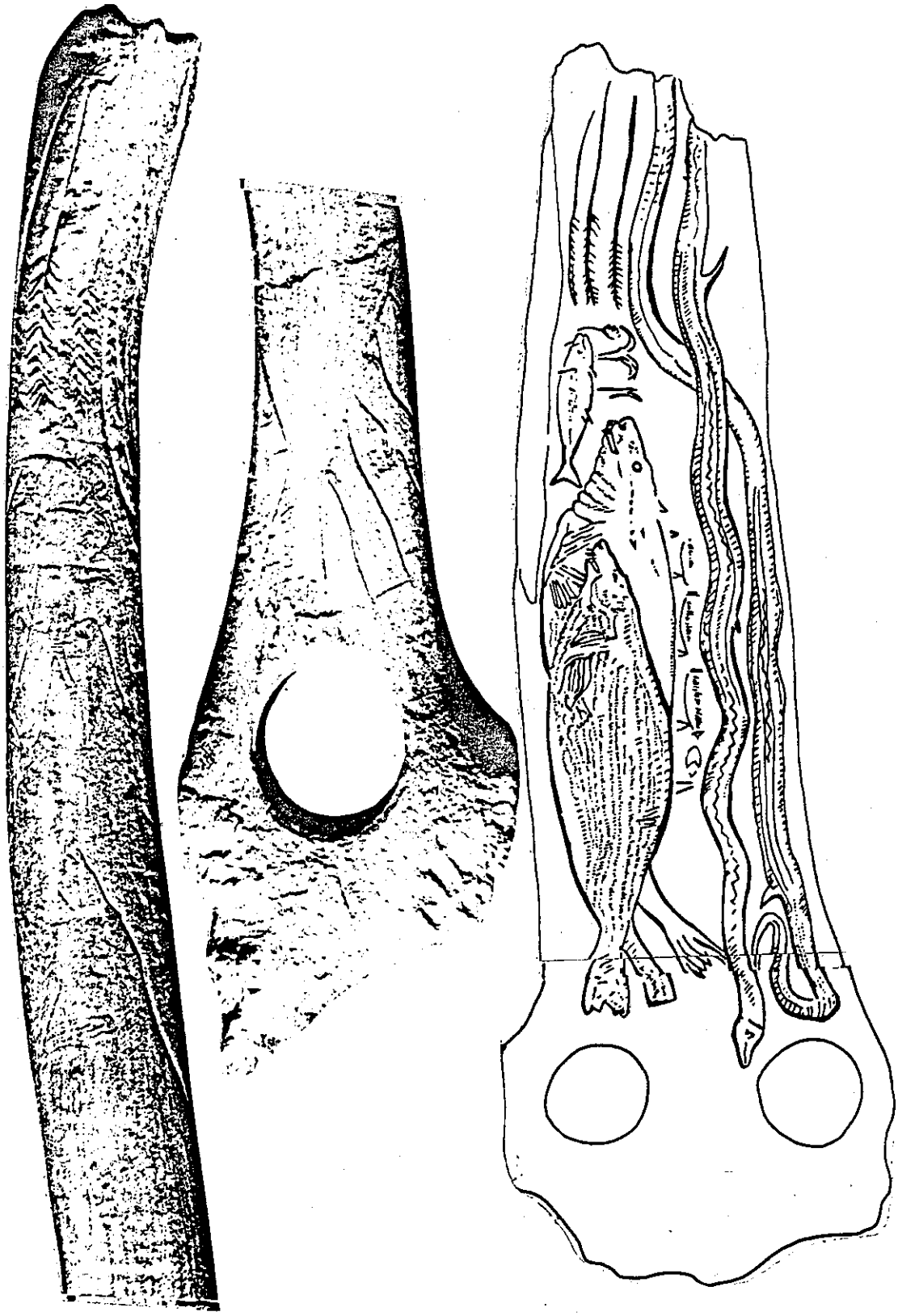


Fig. 13. Magdalenian engraving on reindeer antler (1880's, Montagaudier).

Fig. 14. From a large composite cave painting (Mtoko Cave, Rhodesia).

were not destroying the animals themselves, but their bodies, and believed they could resurrect them in their art.

> One important result of such image-making rites is that it allowed early man to participate in the workings of nature's mysterious forces. Henceforth he could feel less alienated, believing that through his magic he had some influence in the animal world and so could control his own destiny--he could modify natural events to his own advantage--particularly in the all important matter of success in the hunt.[15]

Another possible explanation of the rituals may be found in the concept of "totem" or animal relatives. This purports that "savages [are said to] look on their relationships with the totem with a deep seriousness--it seems that they sometimes live in a kind of dream world in which they can be man and animal at the same time."[16] This is further developed by Andreas Lommel where he explains that

> Primitive man lives in a more or less unconscious state. This does not mean that he is without understanding, but that he perceives his environment in a naïve manner, and is therefore in a better position to experience it directly and, if he represents it artistically, to do so with freshness and vigour.[17]

As much as we theorize, we can never really know the workings of the primitive mind. Perhaps one of the greatest clues lies in the very act of trying to "know" him as we now know man. In Gombrich's words,

> We call these people primitive not because they are simpler than we are--their processes of thought are often more complicated than ours--but because they are closer to the state from which all mankind once emerged.[19]

With this view, I return to the special creativity of every newborn I previously spoke of and ask--could the rituals in the womb-like darkness of the caves not be a reaffirmation of this state by virtue of its very resemblance to the original context of human creation I spoke of earlier? Might the paintings be recordings of the ritual itself--how each artist "saw" during them and what he "re-cognized"; reminders of a way of seeing that keeps the breath of life in one's total view of the world--which in itself can become a cave with no opening if one allows it to?

According to Brion, "the magic of cave art was that it represented a re-creation of the visible world as man gave form to his own vision of reality."[20]

> . . . The important understanding to which we come is that the artists of Cascaux and other caves like it, practicing perhaps thirty thousand years ago, indicate right from the beginning that the making of images is a way of participating in life and of possessing, or making one's own, those events which are particularly significant because they reveal the quality of a true relatedness between ourselves and some aspect of the external world. . . . Through such involvements the artist participates in the life process and finds some psychic reality which allows some meaning to emerge from the flux of time and the inscrutability of the universe (Fig. 15).[21]

Children's Drawings

Moving from the walls of caves to those of modern day homes, although often difficult for parents to accept, at a very young age children begin to express themselves artistically in their own primitive way.

Fig. 15. Outlines of human hands superimposed on a bison and other animals (25,000 BC. Cueva del Castillo, Puente Viesgo, Santander).

The first scribbles are said to be indications of a child's innate sense of design. One could assume that they have almost no relation to the things children consciously remember having seen; that "they are not intended as representation but rather as presentation"--joyous emotional outbursts with no conscious strings--"an exciting experience of bringing about something visible that was not there before (Fig. 16); this interest in the visible product for its own sake, to some extent remains alive in all art."[22] In the words of Arthur Zaidenberg, "This early scribble is uninhibited, in contrast to the lack of adventurousness in the grown up which causes him to follow a 'style' to its usually dead end, and is only one of possibly hundreds of 'designs' which flow naturally from a child."[23]

As prehistoric man began to seek order in the random scratches made on bones, with seemingly even fewer such accidental suggestions, patterns and shapes eventually emerge in the scribbling of young children (Fig. 17). To witness such development is to experience in yet another form the "magic" in the act of drawing. As Arnheim describes it,

> To see organized form emerge in the scribbles of children is to watch one of the miracles of nature. The observer can not help being reminded of another process of creation, the shaping of cosmic whirls and spheres from amorphous matter in the universe. Circular shapes gradually appear in the clouds of zigzag strokes.[24]

The first shapes acquired by children are the simple ones, the "premordial circle" being the simplest of all. Once

Fig. 16. Yana's drawing with Grandmother Ruggiero at age 2.

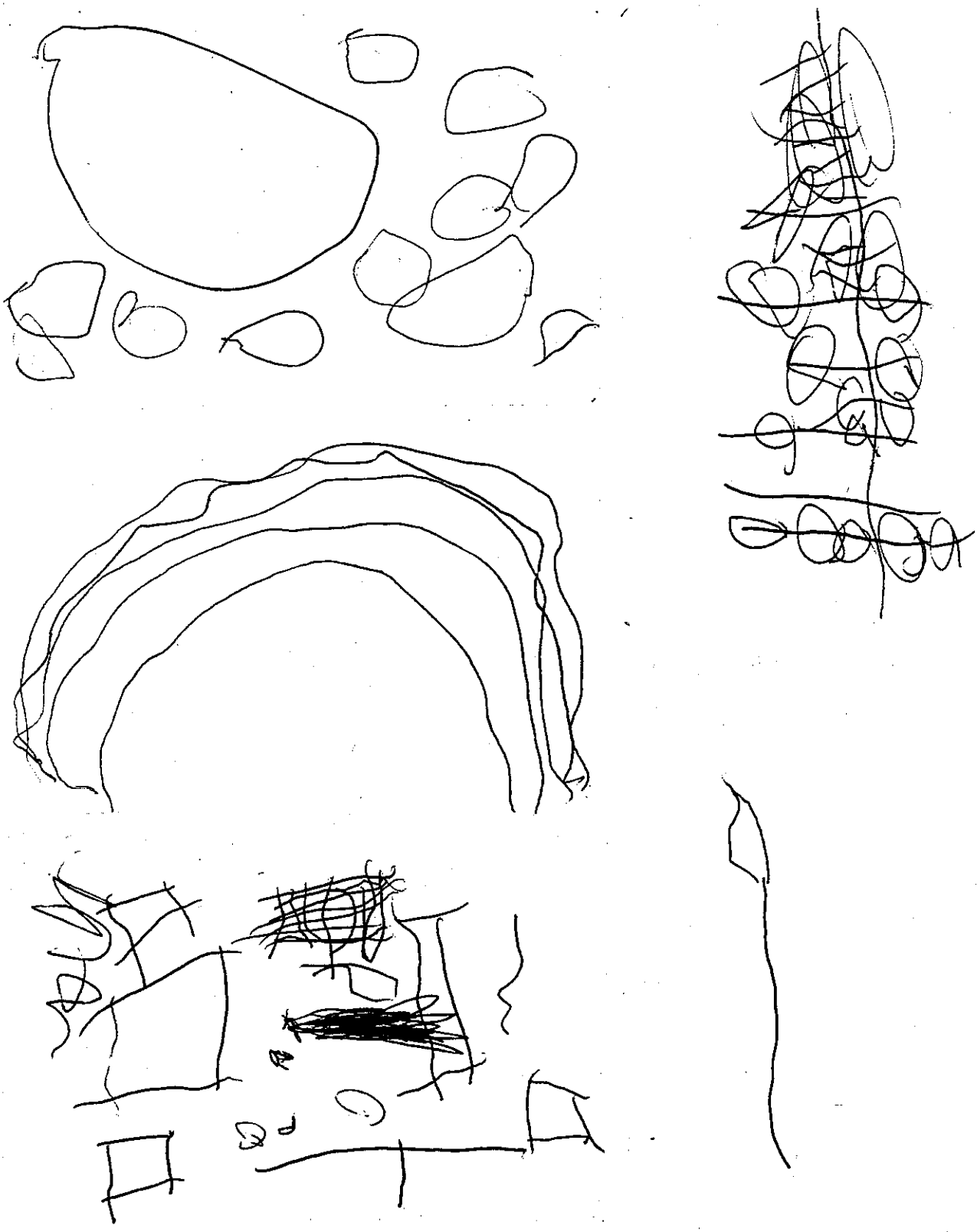


Fig. 17. Yana's drawings at age 3: clouds, an apple tree, a candle, Yana's room and a rainbow.

discovered, this most primal shape becomes a unit in progressively more organized forms such as faces, flowers and especially the sunbursts to which Jung has applied the Sanscrit word "mandalla" (Fig. 18). The occurrence of circular, concentrically-arranged figures is said to be an archetype--"a psychic expression of identity of brain structure irrespective of racial differences."[26] It is found in the art of all cultures from the most ancient images of the prehistoric Venus figures (Fig. 19) to modern works such as Picasso's Woman Before a Mirror (Fig. 20).

The psychology of this phenomenon is elucidated by Arnheim as he explains that

> The universal occurrence of the pattern in children's drawings would seem to be sufficiently explained by the need of the young mind for visual order at a low level of complexity. At the same time such patterns are able to symbolize deepest insights into the nature of the cosmos as they are intuited and shaped by the unconscious and the conscious mind. This demonstrates the unity of the mind, which needs and creates the same forms in the outermost layers of sensory perception and the hidden core, from which dreams and visions originate.[27]

For a time, children use circles to portray specific shapes as they use "one-word sentences."[28] As the need for diversity increases, more shapes begin to appear in their drawings. The repetition of scribbling reaches a progressively more sophisticated stage in a highly economic use of shapes (Fig. 21). The daring, carefree abandonment of scribbling tones down as children begin to know more of the world, but their insight into essentials is still ever-apparent in this

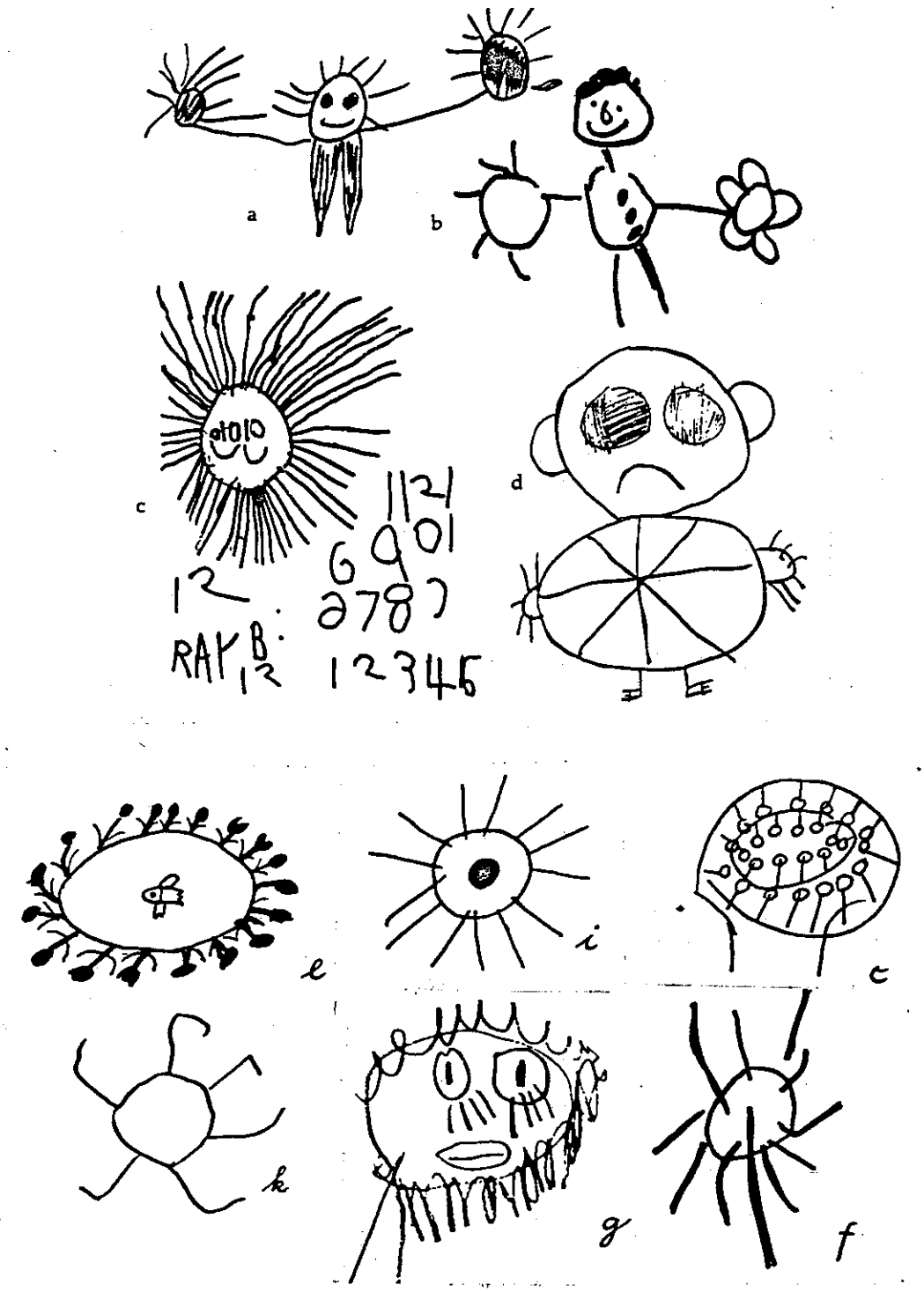


Fig. 18. Patterns in children's drawings incorporating the "mandalla."

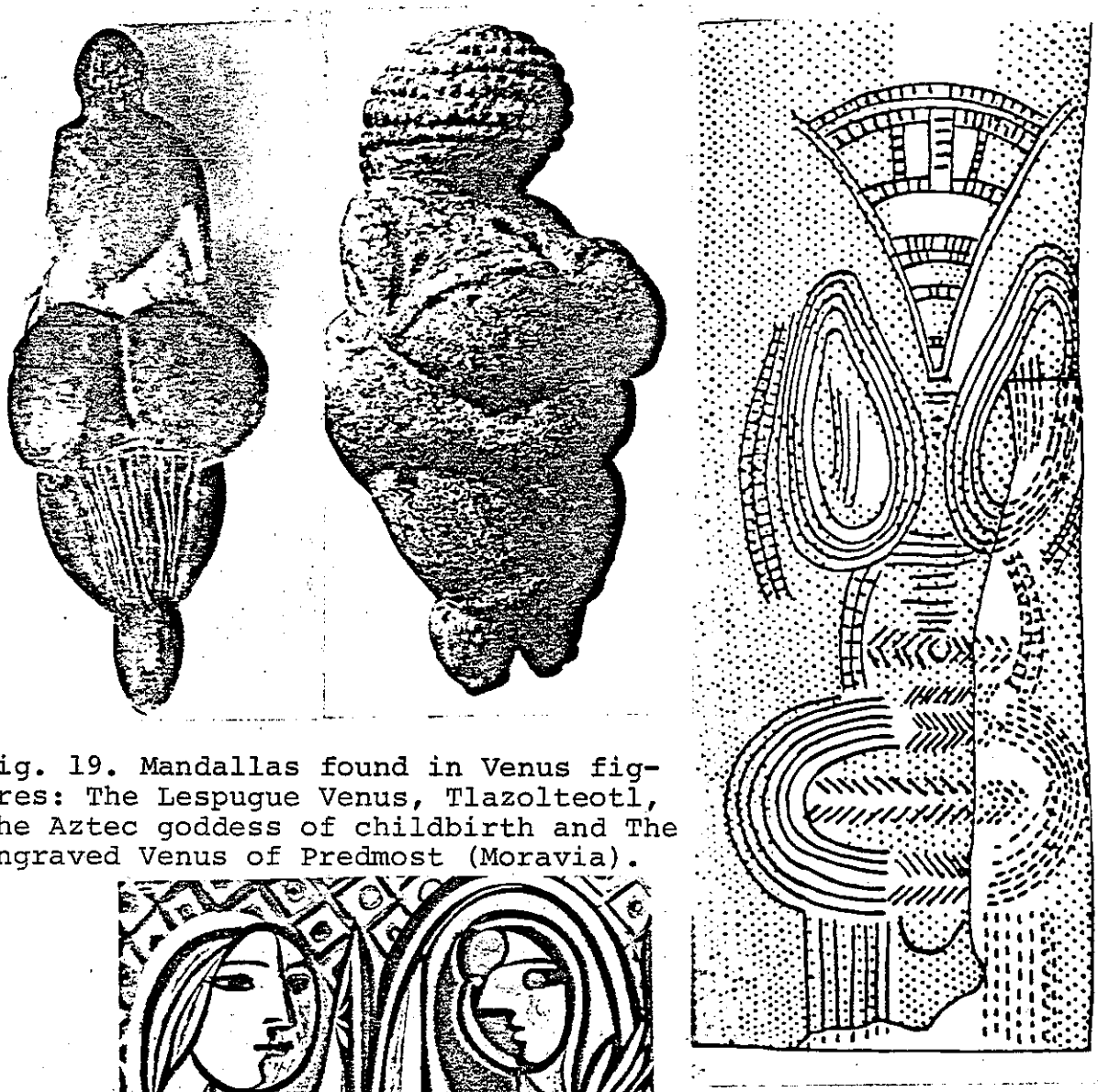


Fig. 19. Mandallas found in Venus figures: The Lespugue Venus, Tlazolteotl, The Aztec goddess of childbirth and The Engraved Venus of Predmost (Moravia).

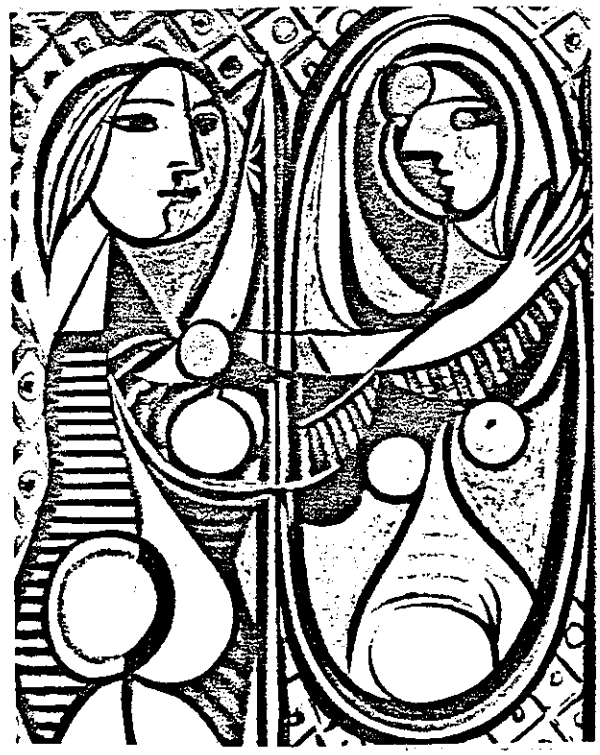


Fig. 20. Woman Before a Mirror by Pablo Picasso (1932, Museum of Modern Art, N.Y.).

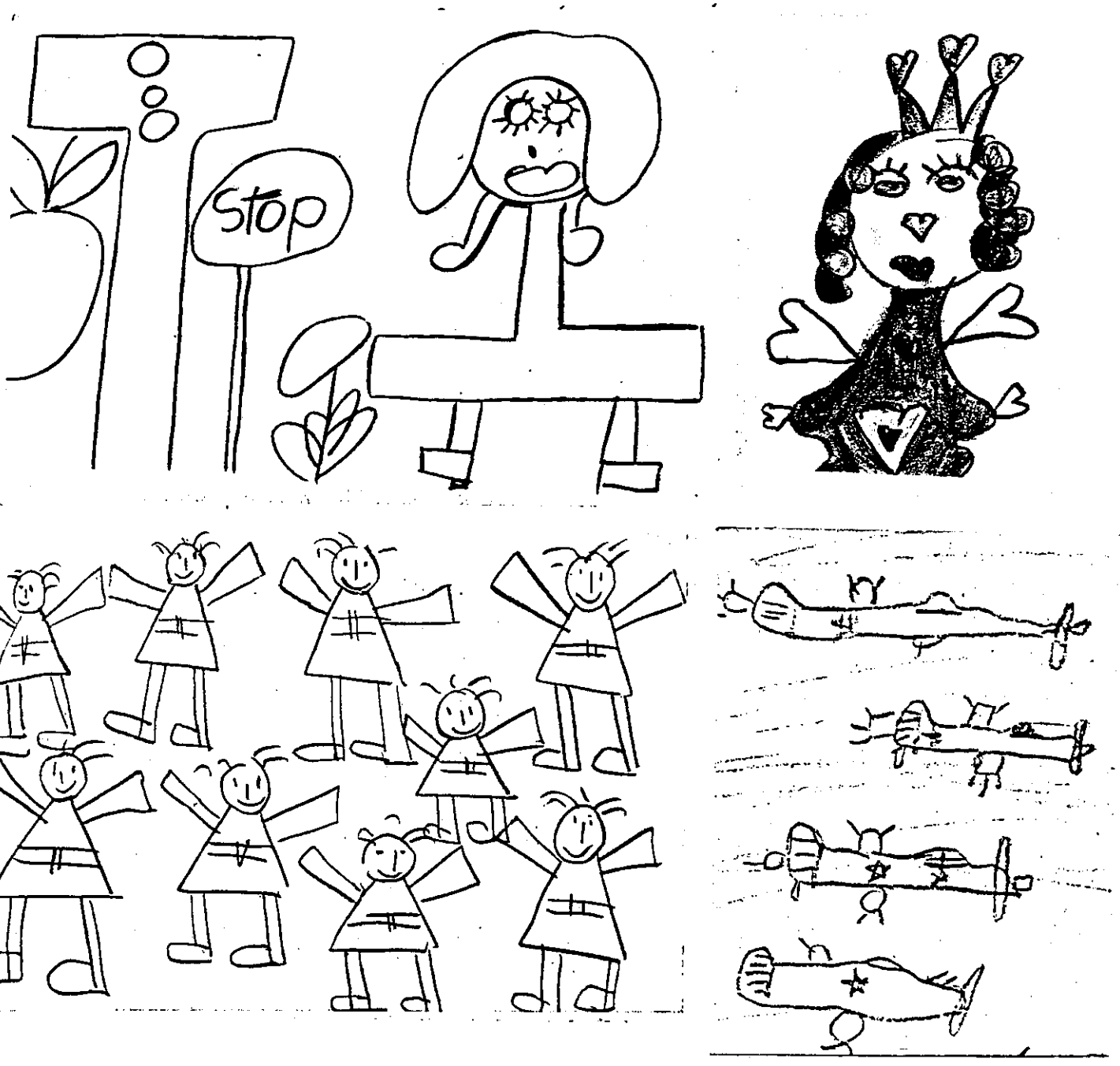


Fig. 21. Examples of repetition of units in children's drawings.

ingenious way of ordering so few parts into often rather complex wholes.

An economic use of shape produces a sense of unity, and when children do make changes they are usually conservative, as changing only one unit represents a changing of meaning; "variation usually occurs in some 'accessory' parts of the drawing--leaving the 'core' undisturbed."[29] Even the parts are related to one another in a sequence in which they are drawn. In their drawings, we can witness young children following an example of nature, which, according to Isaac Newton "does nothing in vain, and more is in vain when less will serve; for nature is pleased with simplicity, and affects not the pomp of superfluous causes."[30]

As with much primitive art, it is difficult for many adults to really appreciate the drawings of children. Technical deficiencies in terms of what the adult knows often renders them meaningless. But some of their deepest meaning can lie in these very "errors," such as incorrect proportion and lack of perspective. The enlargement of certain features is often an integral part of the picture's meaning (Fig. 22). "Incorrect" proportion and flat perspective is what the child sees and not what he "should" see. With eyes and mind at such an early stage of development, children know little of the agreed-upon ways of seeing of adults--which include proportion, perspective and other areas I will give further attention to later in this paper. In the words of Zaidenberg,

Fig. 22. "I Have a Headache." Child's drawing showing exaggerated proportion.

> Picasso, Matiss, Braque, Miro, Chagall, Klee and countless others are accused of regression to the infantile and the uncivilized . . . they would not be insulted. According to their writings and statements, they struggled long and studied deeply to arrive at that state of purity which would allow them to see with the clear, original vision of children and to paint these visions (Fig. 23).[31]

Like the paintings on the walls of the hidden caves, the drawings of children are recordings of experiences. According to Arnheim, "pictorial representations must be related to the experience they reflect," and "the nature of representation is illustrated most simply and clearly in the drawings of young children."[32] The art of children, like that of prehistoric man, is said to possess what has been called a "naïve realism," where there is no difference between the physical object and its image as perceived by the mind of the creator.[33] These drawings look the way they do because they are not copies but rather symbols of real things. In comparing the incised paleolithic head from Les Combarelles (Fig. 24) to "Ghostie" (Fig. 25), we find a rather eerie resemblance. Eerie not because "the rough polyhedron shape, the big round eyes, and the lines for nose and mouth are common to both images"; but in the fact that upon completion the child named her drawing "Ghostie"--the essential meaning of the word being breath, spirit or soul.[34] As Graham Collier explains,

> Possibly she was thinking consciously of the idea of a ghost in the popular sense, yet, it is also possible that she was moved by unconscious and elemental attitudes to life and death--by the thought of the spirit as distinct from the body--an idea which, from time to time,

Fig. 23. Bonnard painting compared with child's.

Fig. 24. Incised head from Les Combarelles (Dordogne).

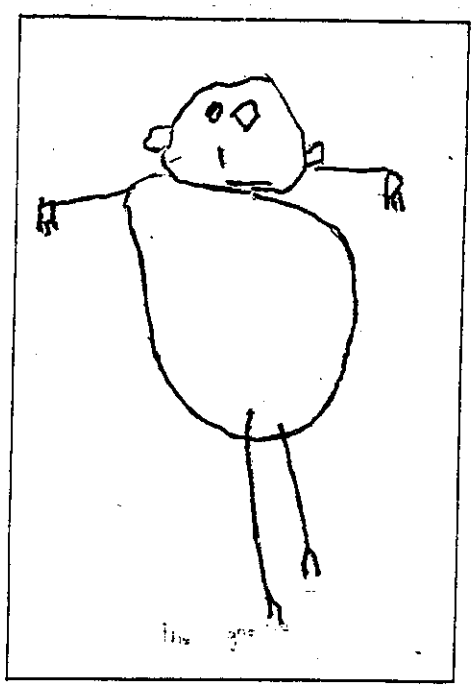


Fig. 25. "Ghostie."

> haunts us all. . . . The "Ghostie" suggests that the two images of the head spring from a common imaginative root. The thousands of years that separate these works do not seem to have modified either the vitality or the persistence of the theme--the ubiquitous watching eyes of unseen presences and spirit forces.[35]

Recall the eyes we added to create the "ghostie" of the Gombrich experiment?

As children "see" more, they continue to create with varying influences from what they know in terms of their own experience in and of the context of common knowledge of life, ways of living and being a person (Fig. 26).[36] What is known today seems far more complex than what was known and how it was known in prehistoric times--so long before any "age of reason." Over the ages, living has become a matter of dealing with more and more concepts. It is often difficult to distinguish between those which exist only in the mind of man and which are of the world; which are completely "man-made" and which are discovered through man's experience. Recall those with greater experience in civilized society being more susceptible to the Müller-Lyer illusion.

Modern child psychology purports the existence of two distinct human types which can be discerned from childhood: the rational (Fig. 27) and the sensory (Fig. 28).[37] Of course there are various intermediary types as well (Fig. 29). Just as the differences can be seen among well-known artists, it is manifested in the drawings of young children.

Dr. E. Minkowska speaks of the types as two different worlds. The rational or conceptual child's drawings are

Fig. 26. Children's drawings expressing ways of living and being a person.

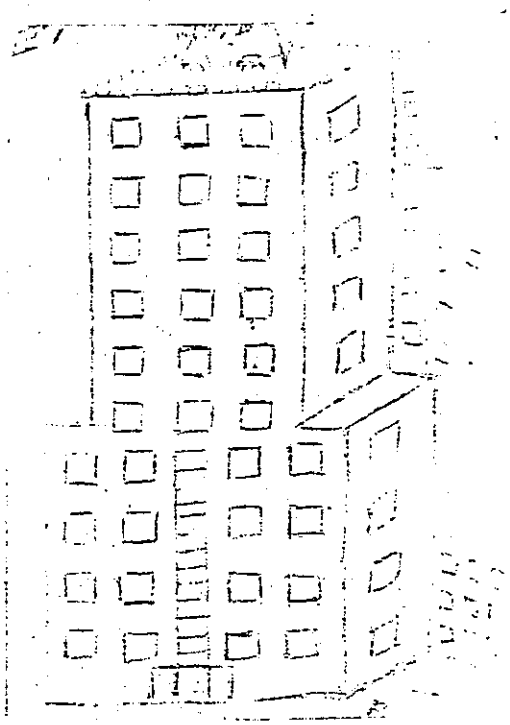


Fig. 27. A conceptual or rational child's drawing.

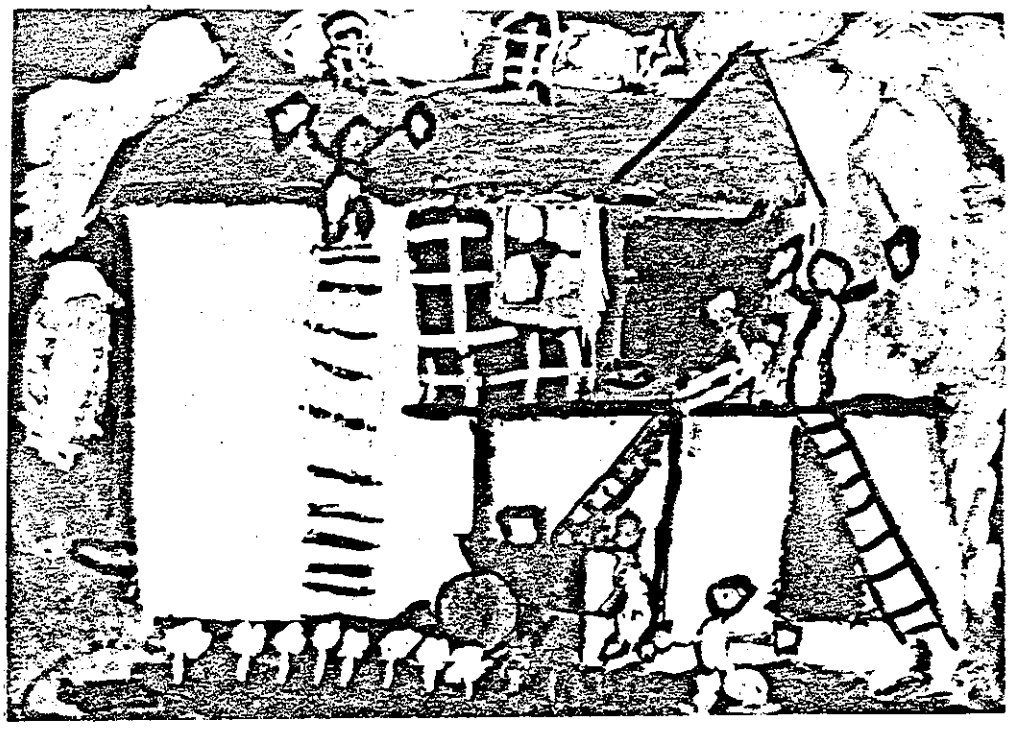


Fig. 38. A sensory child's drawing.

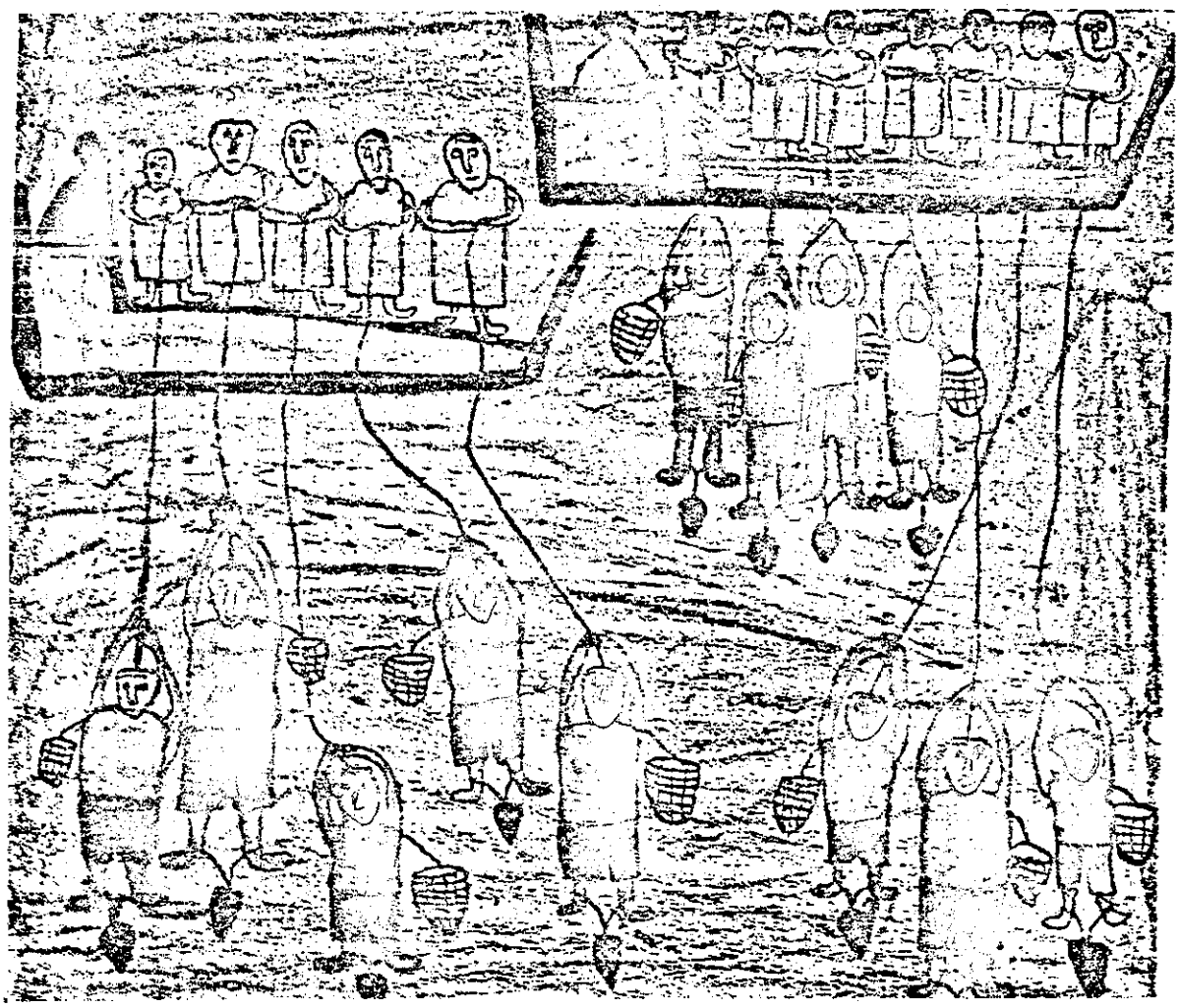


Fig. 29. Drawing done by a child at a stage between conceptual and sensory.

"dominated by the mechanism of separation," "tend toward immobility," and "compensate through precision what they lose in dynamism," whereas, the sensory child's drawings are dominated by joining or connection, and "although oriented toward movement, often err through impreciseness of form"--in both, we discover elements in man's basic attitude toward the universe and toward himself.[38] As explained by Rene Huyghe,

> The world appears to [man] as an object of knowledge, and even as a reason for acquiring knowledge, for knowledge is indispensable to man if he is to find his way about the world. The two modes of apprehension are possible, depending on whether the sensory or the intellectual faculties are put to use. The first, the sensory mode seeks being; the second, the intellectual mode, seeks knowledge. . . . Sensory knowledge, which is prdominantly intuitive, tends toward an association with the object so close that we could call it fusion, a surge of participation and love makes it possible to experience this object as though we had been integrated into its existence. . . . By contrast, intellectual apprehension tends to separate itself from its object (ob-jectum), even to move as far away from it as possible in order to keep it under its lucid scrutiny, and to be able to determine its limits and its form. For what this type of apprehension seeks is to define and to characterize the object, ie., to grasp it in its permanance and universality--apart from life, one might say, and shorn of those variations which go against the typical and immutable.[39]

And so the child leaves the circle of the womb, the first home, perhaps losing sight of whence he became, as he sees more and more during the circular journey of life.

American Primitive

At one time during the Middle Ages, an artisan was considered an artist. No distinction was made between crafts and

the post-Renaissance tradition of easel painting, or "high arts." As the aesthetics of the aristocracy and art academies became more refined, the craft system derived from the medival guilds and customs governing the production of utilitarian objects became the basis for Europe's folk culture.[40]

Toward the end of the eighteenth century, various works that were combinations of the two traditions began to appear in America. Some say this style springs more from craft than painters traditions, while others simply identify it as what it is not: any art created outside of the European academic tradition, or "non-academic art."[41] The most general term for these creations is "American Folk Painting"--an art of and for the ordinary, everyday people (as the word "folk" implies).[42]

In the 1940s this style was accepted as a "mildly amusing bypath of art called 'primitive lane.'"[43] The word "primitive" has since been used rather loosely to describe any sort of early, provincial, crude or anonymous painting of the years between around 1790 and 1875 (Fig. 30). In another sense, the word relates to the depiction of the primeval wilderness of the American landscape itself (Fig. 31); where the high arts were concerned with the romance of wilderness and preservation of natural scenes to the extent of separating man and nature (Fig. 32), American Primitive, perhaps as a result of its links with the crafts traditions, with its absorbtion in man-made contributions to the scene (Figs. 33 & 34) almost implies a conquest of nature.[44]

Fig. 30. Conversation Piece by J. N. Eaton (c. 1800, Halladay-Thomas Collection).

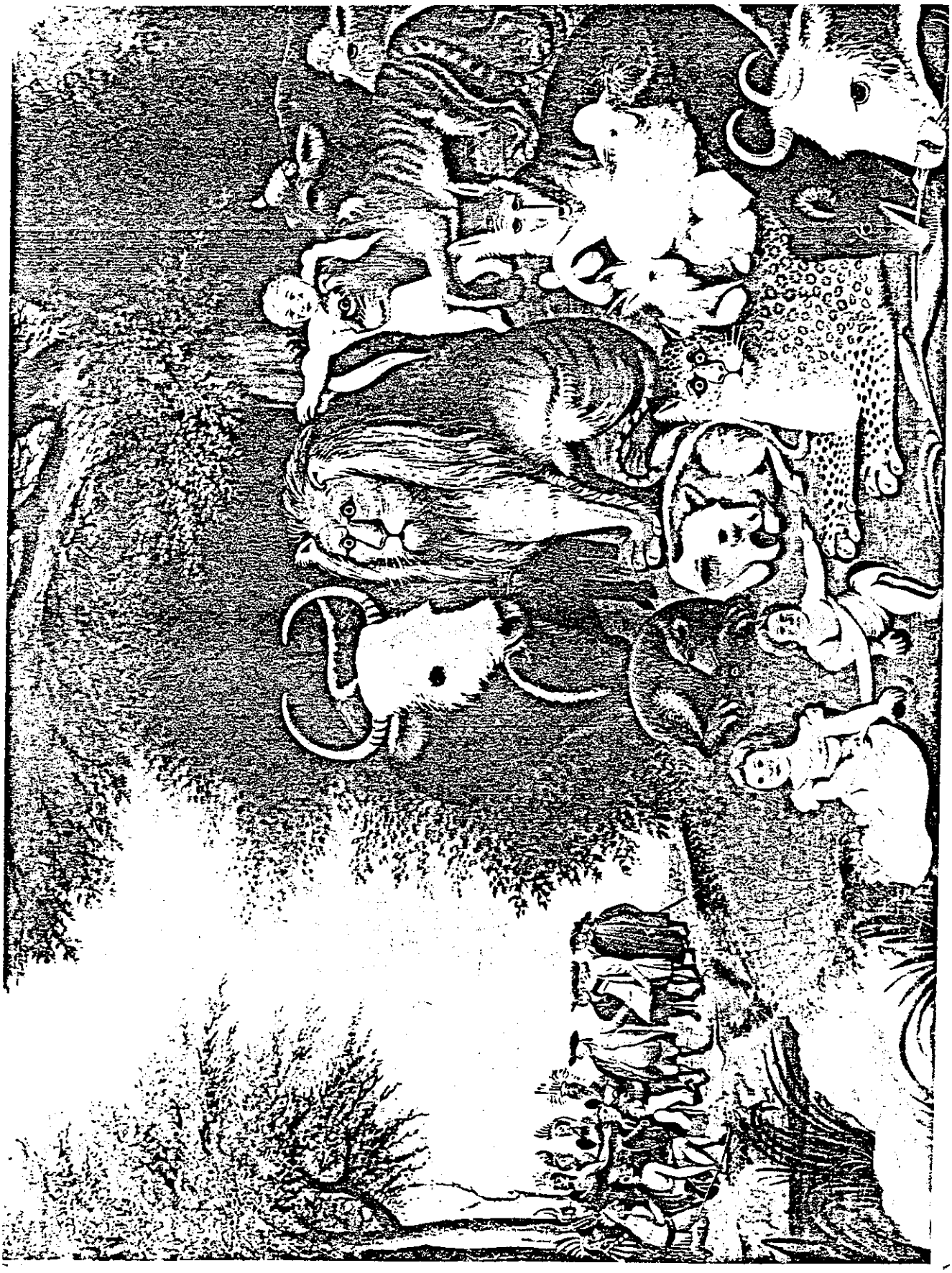


Fig. 31. The Peaceable Kingdom by Edward Hicks (c. 1835, Museum of Modern Art, Rockefeller Collection, Williamsberg).

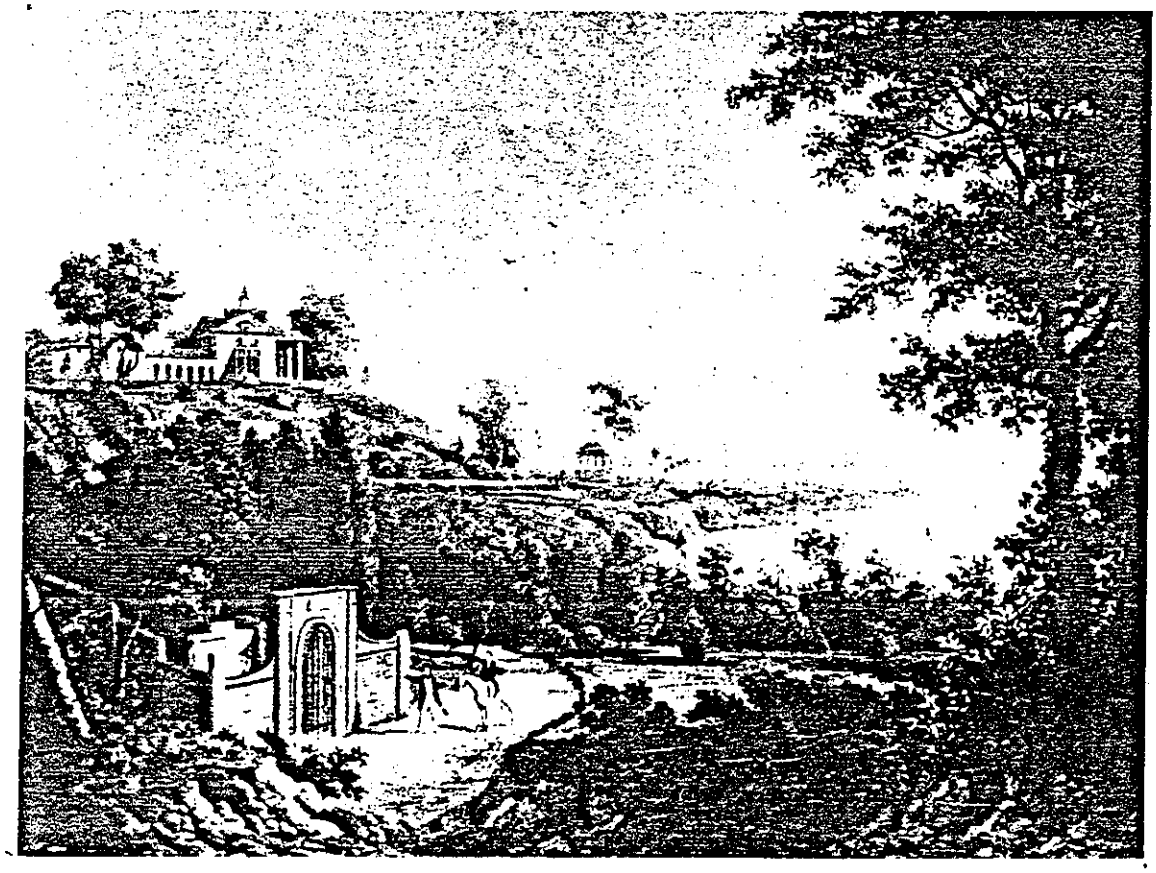


Fig. 32. Washington's Tomb and Mt. Vernon by W. H. Bartlett (Mid 19th century, Mrs. P. B. Daingerfield Collection).

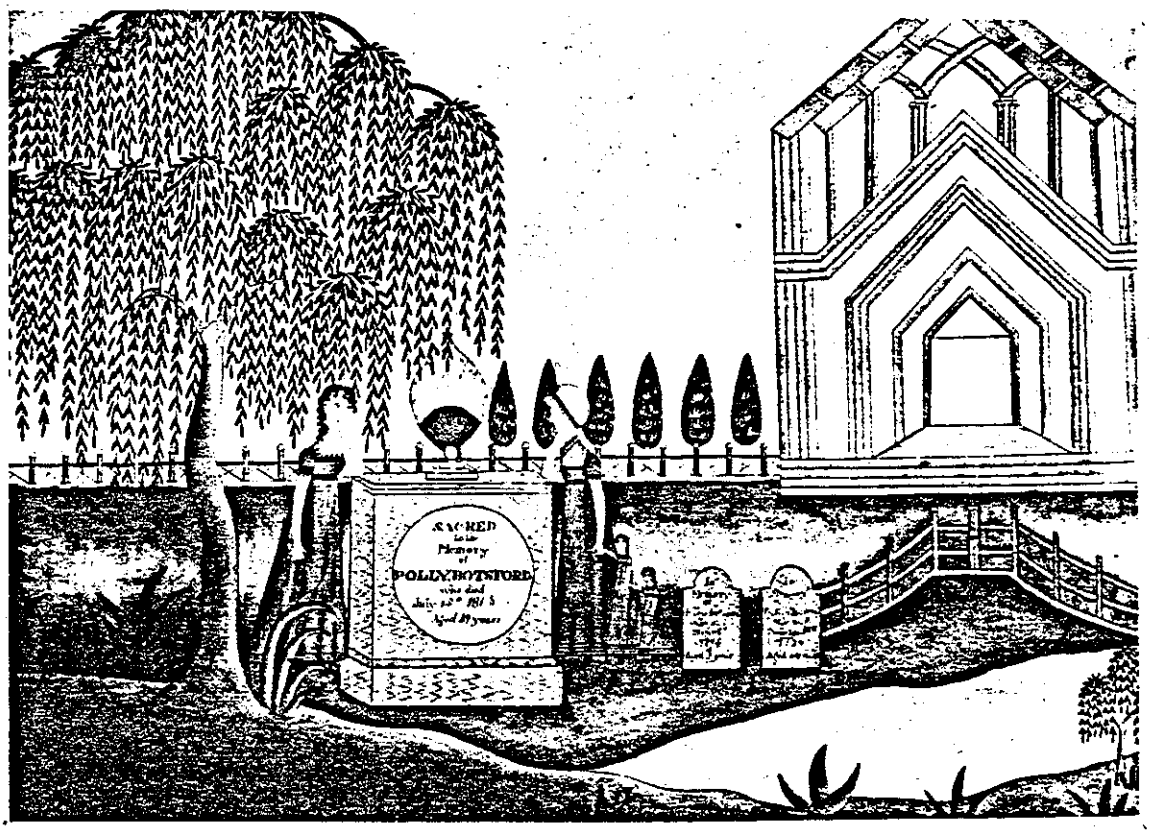


Fig. 33. Memorial for Polly Botsford (1813, Museum of Modern Art, Rockefeller Collection, Williamsberg).

Fig. 34. Flax Scutching by Linton Park (1850, National Gallery of Art, William and Bernice Garbisch Collection, New York).

American Primitive reached its height in the mid-nineteenth century and can more accurately be called a type of vision (frequently referred to as "naïve") than a specific school or style. Although the purpose often appears simply decorative, the murals, pictures and designs on fireboards, wallpaper and furniture, not to mention the paintings themselves, are often recordings of images and scenes as important to the life of those who painted them, as were the original "primitives" to the life of Ice Age man and the drawings of young children (Fig. 35).

There is an independence from the real appearance of things, which Jean Lipman attributes to the "primitive memory image."[45] In her words, "the memory does not retain all images equally, but makes a selection of those aspects which present the object in the greatest clearness and completeness."[46] Although the images are suggested by reality, the mind and personality of the primitive painter transforms many of them according to what the artist knows as well as what he sees.

Along with the lack of formal training, this "essentially non-optical vision" allows for a unique freedom from realism, which often results in the purely aesthetic qualities of abstract design (Fig. 33).[47] These painters often attempted to reproduce reality but due to this lack of technical skill and a simplicity of vision, their creative powers were channeled more into the depiction of those aspects of the painting they "re-cognized" and knew best; their own extraction of the essentials--their most "graspable forms." The sense of color

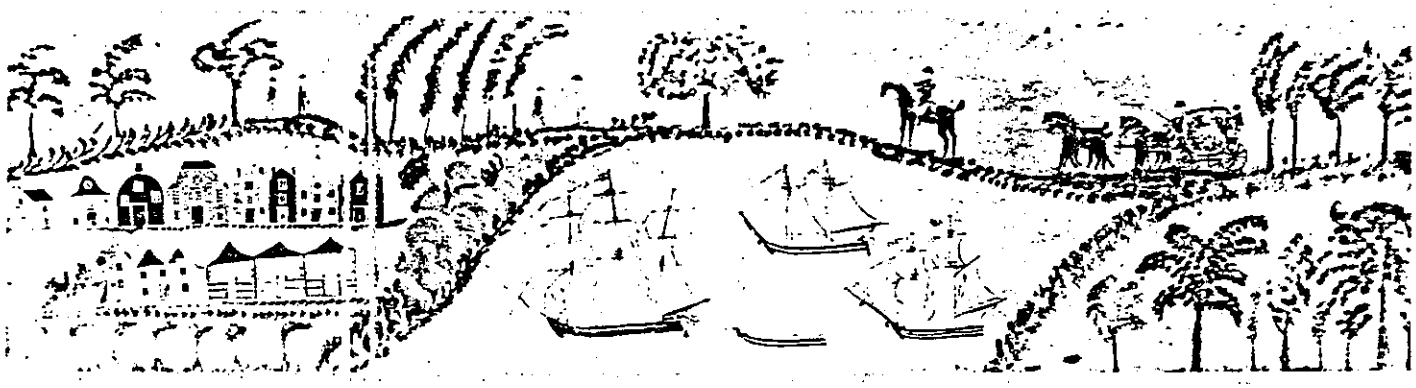


Fig. 35. Ornamental fresco (c. 1812, Ryther House, Bernardson, Mass.).

and design is said to have been instinctive rather than technical and the quality of these paintings is in the clarity and mental vigor with which they were done.[48]

It goes without saying that the American Primitive painter's ways of seeing and views of the world differed from prehistoric man and children, as ultimately do any two individuals', according to their experience. Although usually from rural areas, of course their contact with, and experience of nature was not nearly as intense as that of the cave painters. What these people had come to know in their lives differed from that of cave painters and young children due not only to increased development of human reason, but in their increased experience of "man-made" concepts, or more developed agreed-upon ways of seeing both internally and externally; the literal and figurative "carpentered world."

Still, upon observation of many works of the three groups, one can find certain fundamental similarities. For example, as in numerous prehistoric works of art and children's drawings, the figures are typically abbreviated and flattened. The colors are sharp and the subjects are often depicted in either profile or full face. The three share a certain vitality in which the pictures have a special way of almost speaking for themselves in a most unusually clear language--I will say more on this later.

Many of the American Primitive painters were elderly and began to paint only after age excluded them from taking part in all the more practical affairs of nineteenth-century life.

One might assume that this freedom in many ways transformed their manner of participation in life to ways similar to prehistoric man and children, who are essentially involved in the simple living of life, rather than preoccupied with all the extraneous affairs of man and the world. It follows that such a life style, partially as the result of increased exposure time would allow for closer observation of the world. Perhaps this is what leads to a way of seeing that is at the core of all three groups of beginning artist's creations; a heightened awareness of their place in the larger picture of life in this world.

Of the American Primitive artists best-known today--John Kane, Horace Pippin, Edward Hicks, Morris Hirshfield and Anna Mary Robertson Moses, "Grandma Moses" is the most renowned (Fig. 36).

Born in 1860 in Greenwich, a small village in the scenic hills of upstate New York just over the Vermont border, the closest Moses ever came to formal art training was the geography lesson in the one-room district school she attended--as Moses recalled, "the teacher would give us maps to draw, and I would make the mountains in my own way; the teacher liked them and would ask if he might keep them."[49] Perhaps this training was more relevant to her style than given credit for, considering the Physical Environment of Peoples Hypothesis.

Moses began painting seriously in her mid-seventies, during a time that primitive art was in its final stages of being. Often to the dismay of the current representatives of

Fig. 36. Anna Mary Robertson Moses at her "tip-up" table (1948, photographed by Otto Kallir).

abstract expressionism such as Gorky, Rothko and Pollock, Moses' work was praised as an optimistic response to the existential uncertainty of the post-World War Two years.[50] Some saw Moses' popularity as a sign of the end of the many routes of abstraction and intellectualized distortion.

The world Moses knew was the farm she grew up and lived on most of her life. She was always enthusiastic about pictures which is a likely explanation for the concern with total composition that characterizes her adult painting.[51] The subject matter of her painting was almost always some scenario involving man and his life in the revolving seasons of nature. The scenes of frolic in the snow, spring storms and strolls through summer meadows are the memories of Moses' girlhood and come to life in the style she so freely invented (Figs. 37 & 38). These were the things she knew--her experience--an integral part of her view of the world and way of seeing, although she looked at them closely enough to "recognize" and paint them only when her life was nearly over.

Although Moses often copied photographs, greeting cards or prints, she painted mainly from memory and an intuitive design sense--"mostly emanation" as she called it.[52] In her own version of the inspiration that enabled her to crystalize her method, Moses writes,

> In the yard one day, there was a new car with those shiny hubcaps. I happened to glance down and see in one of them a perfect little picture . . . far better than the ones I had been copying. . . . Well . . . I went back and found a window on the porch that had the same,

Fig. 37. Catching the Thanksgiving Turkey by Anna Mary Robertson Moses (1943).

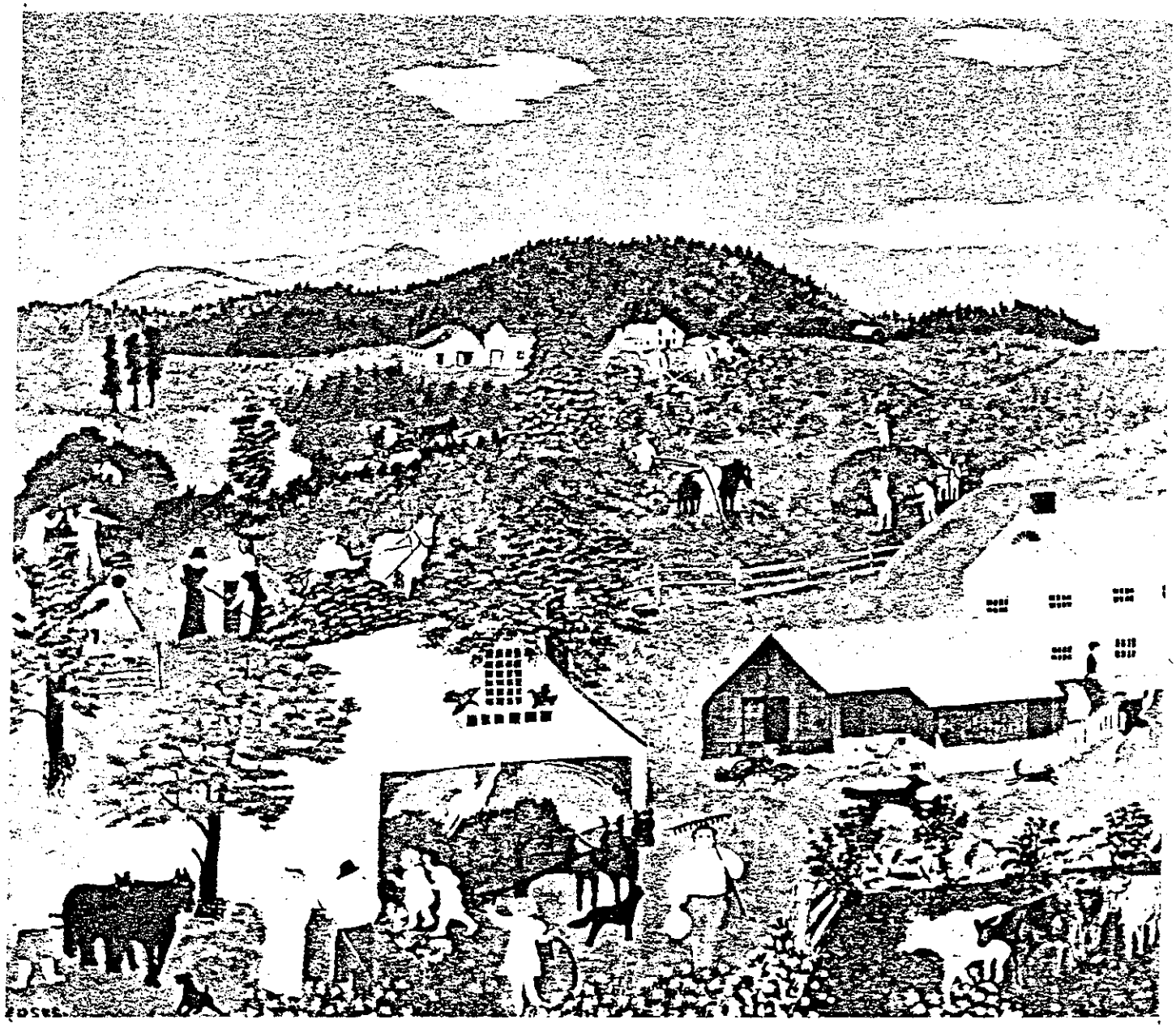


Fig. 38. Haying Time by Anna Mary Robertson Moses (1945).

> perfect little picture reflected in it. The perspective, the colors. By moving a little this way or that, I could frame the view just the way I wanted it. There it was.[53]

Perhaps the vision showed Moses a way of seeing the world as it is, and not as it should be; her framing in the window a choosing of that which she wished to re-cognize and re-create by painting in a way that Frederick Franks might call "letting the perception on my retina be affirmed by the hand that notes down in obediance . . . not in any way 'self expression' . . . [but] letting what I draw express what it is through me."[54] Working harmoniously through the rational and sensory modes, past knowledge, rather than dictate, contributes to the recording of an experience of the moment. As trees and sky are reflected on a lake, the images of Moses' past lived in her mind as long as the sun of her life continued to shine. They continue to live in her paintings.

Unique vitality is present in Moses' paintings on various levels. Living off of and kept alive by the earth, Moses is a part of nature and nature, a part of her. "Anna Mary Robertson Moses saw nature as a farmer sees it, and she saw it as an artist; in the end the two points of view turned out to be similar."[55] Moses returns the gift of life in her paintings. Like the phantom images "captured" on the ancient rock formations, and the six-year old's "Ghostie," the figures in Moses' paintings seem to be alive. "Her paintings talk, and they talk common sense. They breathe and they breathe wholesomely."[56]

As our eye travels over the composition of Joy Ride (Fig. 39), one by one each figure, and eventually the entire scene comes to life in our minds as we re-cognize it; we re-create it. In order to perceive the whole scene, the viewer has to order the parts which are like the units I spoke of in children's drawings. Upon close inspection the figures are actually no more realistic than many of the images of pre-historic man and children. But "although the characters lack identity, the accuracy of the landscape makes their peregina-tions real, and we become them."57

The figure of the woman beckoning in the doorway is a common motif in Moses' works (Fig. 40). In the enlargement (Fig. 41) we see that in itself, it even rather resembles the "spirits" of the prehistoric face (Fig. 24) and the "Ghostie" (Fig. 25). In the context of the larger picture it lives as a common experience in the life of man: a warm welcome home. Regardless of our experience, its simplicity enables us to re-create it as we see it--as we know it.

Could there be some significance in the way the whole scene revolves around this? The beckoning, welcoming home to the in-ternal structure of the house (like the caves, a symbol of the human mind)--an essential part of the composition, to which it belongs entirely--by necessity, separate from the greater elements by walls, but the door wide open to other humans.

In the experience of this painting, the woman at the door (bearer of our first earthly home), beckons us not only into the house, but into the entire scene: the hills, the

Fig. 39. Joy Ride by Anna Mary Robertson Moses (1953).

Fig. 40. The "woman beckoning in the doorway" motif in Moses' paintings shown in details from By the Sea (1942), It Snows, Oh It Snows (1951), The Old Oaken Bucket (1946), Sugaring Off In Maple Orchard (1940), Sugar Time (1060), Checkered House (1943), December (1943), Vermont Sugar (1961) and Early Spring Time on the Farm by Anna Mary Robertson Moses.

Fig. 41. Enlarged detail from Joy Ride.

sleigh, the sky, the road--into life itself--timeless and eternal; it is what we "make it" but can be shared. It is in the mind of the observer, and in the act of "seeing" it that this painting really is alive.

Earlier I mentioned the predominance of man over nature in American Primitive art; the emphasis being on man-made contributions to the scenes. It is easy to see the differences in which man and nature are portrayed by Grandma Moses. "While she perceived nature sensuously, she perceived figures and objects formally."[58]

But one can see a distinct change in the style of the works Moses did toward the end of her brief career as a painter. In comparing the already wispish figure in the doorway of Joy Ride to the detail of Rainbow (Fig. 42), both the figures and objects (extentions of man) are not so much "in" the larger picture as "of" it (Fig. 43). I find a similar suggestive, almost illusive quality in many of the cave paintings done at the height of the famous series in France (Fig. 11).

Grandma Moses stopped painting in 1961, the year she was put into a nursing home. She died shortly after at age 101.

Fig. 42. Detail from Rainbow by Anna Mary Robertson Moses (1961).

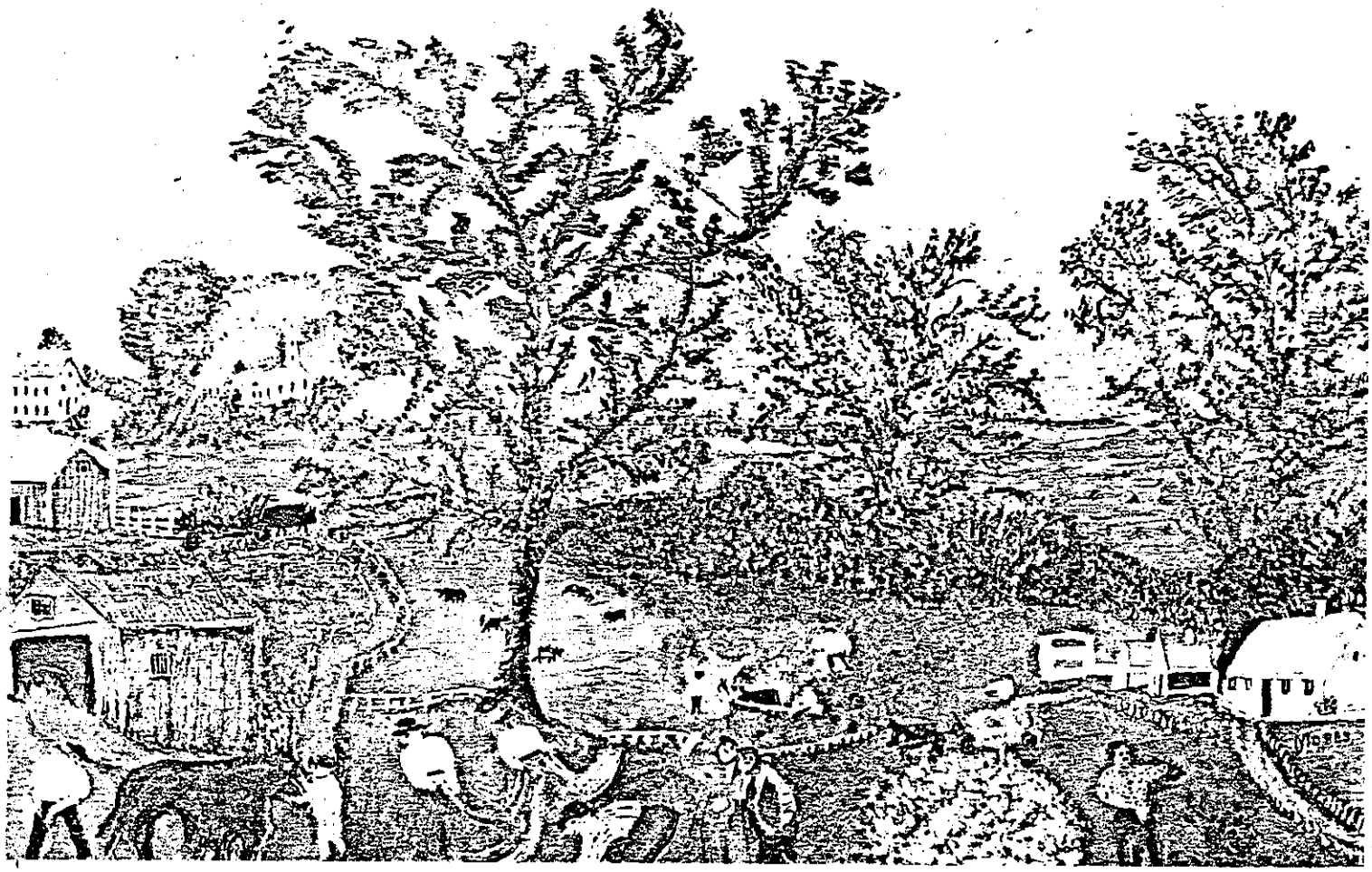


Fig. 43. Rainbow.

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[10]Rudolf Arnheim, Art and Visual Perception (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1964), p. 103.

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[12]Collier, p. 169.

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[42]Jean Lipman and Alice Winchester, Primitive Painters in America, 1750-1950 (New York: Dodd Mead & Company, 1950), p. 2.

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THE CYCLE

All the world's a stage
And all the men and women merely players:
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts,
. . . Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.[1]

As we saw in Rainbow, the "players" in Moses' later scenes begin to blend more into the stage of the world as she then saw it. Where the forms of children's drawings are in a "stage" of emergence, they slowly begin to fade in the paintings of the old woman approaching the oblivion of death. Where the child has just begun, Moses is nearing the formless state whence "all mankind emerged"; a completion of the cycle of human life. Perhaps the brevity of life in prehistoric times kept the end closer to the beginning for many all along.

The story of art is the story of life itself. Each chapter depicts stages in the development of man and his individual, cultural and universal context; the breadth being determined by the scope of his world view. The special vision of the beginner can come at the beginning, the end, or at

various intermediary points. In its strongest form, it is present throughout.

Early in this paper, the act of perceiving was described as "finding a simple, graspable form in an object"--an extraction of essentials that allow us to re-cognize it by re-creating it. We begin to "abstract" from the complex picture of life at an early age, as was seen in the drawings of young children who seek order by constructing wholes out of units they know. As we come to know more units, our picture becomes more "life-like"--like life as we have learned to live it. The more involved we become in our own way of living, the more its reality becomes a whole picture in itself; often one that comes with its own prescribed way of seeing.

We share our world view according to our needs for communication with others, language being the main vehicle; a tangible map of reality. The most widely-spoken language in the art world is called "realism." As seen in the evolution of art of all times and places, this is also a stage of knowing.

The whole of our knowledge in itself can become rather complex. When this occurs, through the same instinctive need for simplicity that children exhibit when they represent wholes with units, we often economically break down what we know and form new units or symbols which synthesize and represent our knowledge. Webster defines this "abstraction" as "a withdrawal from worldly objects. . . . This withdrawal can mean either rejection of worldly objects or that one's

conscious awareness withdraws some truth or reality from the object."[2] Even within the larger cycle of the whole history of art, we find its microcosms from the very start. Note the example of Figure 44 where certain prehistoric art, having achieved a degree of realism, begins to develop toward the signs which eventually evolved into written language.

In the art world today, this often appears as a return to the abstraction of children or primitives, as can be witnessed of many of the great artists who, at a certain point, completely change their style. Although there are fundamental similarities, rather than simplification for creation of meaning, this can be a more refined act of distilling knowledge one has gleaned from his experience.

This art can be knowledge refined to states of such purity that to simply view it is to experience what it represents (if one is willing). In such abstraction, it is more the picture than the artist that invites the viewer into the experience of what he has known. This is the abstraction that Arnheim calls a "means by which the picture interprets what it portrays."[3]

Try visiting with this painting (Fig. 45) for awhile. . . .

Fig. 44. Iberian sketches of deer gradually being transformed into a kind of shorthand. Above: simplified deer (Tajo de Las Figuras, Laguna de la Janda, Cádiz), center: schematized deer and hunter (Nuestra Señora del Castillo, Almadén, drawing by Abbé Breuil) and below: deer reduced to signs (specimens from Southern Andalusia, grouped by the Abbé Breuil).

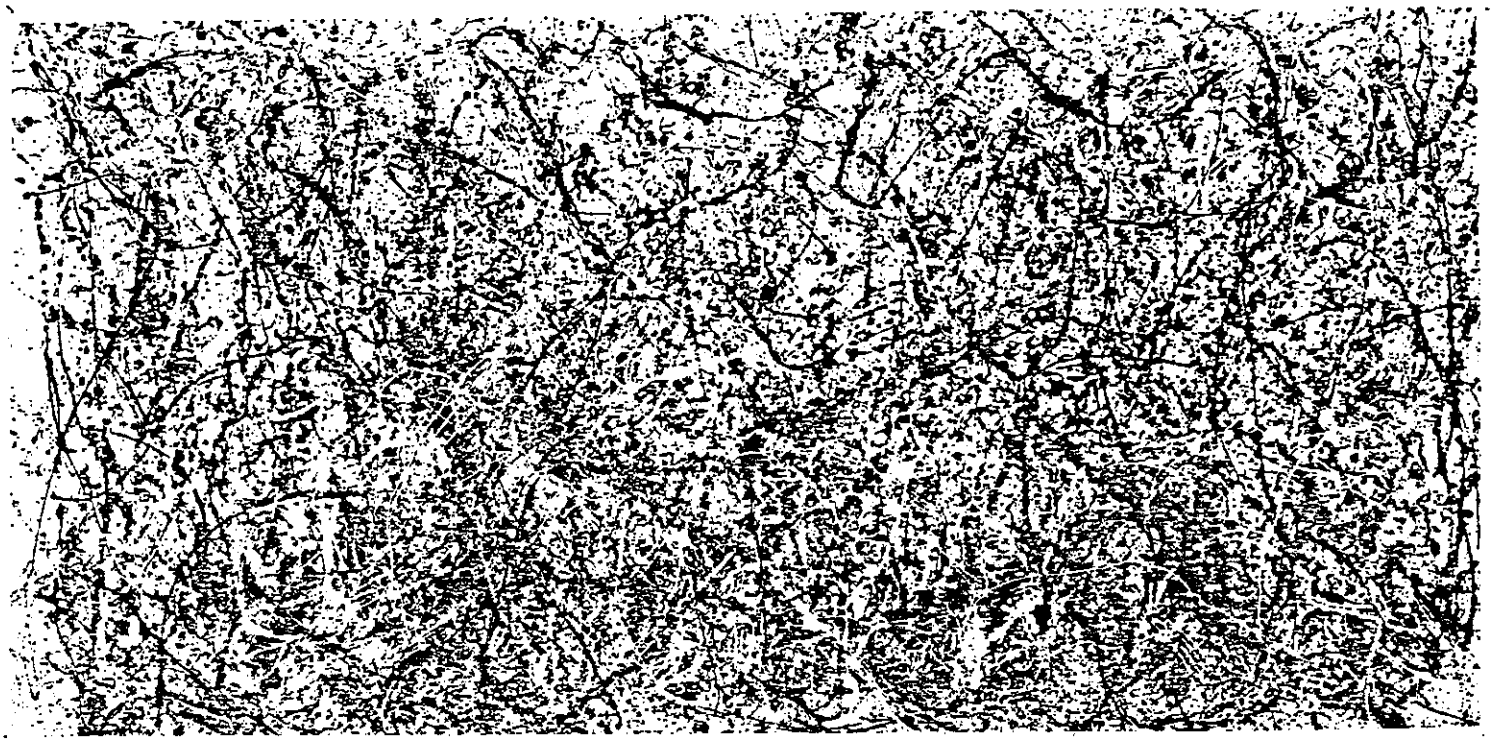

Fig. 45. One by Jackson Pollock (1950).

As with the figure we looked at earlier in this paper (Fig. 3), I chose this rather extreme example of abstraction to more emphatically illustrate my point. After looking at the painting awhile, we give up any search for some pre-determined form or development, and at the moment we stop seeking any one image or a specific impression, our experience becomes our own--"a personal experience that is new and, therefore real to us."[4] Only by re-creating the experience of the artist can we re-cognize and come to know it.

> From the way in which the paint occurs on the canvas we receive a clear impression of the act of painting that created it. Because we feel the motions through which he went, we sense in the work the presence of the artist himself. We recognize that the painting is literally the record of the experience in which Pollock was involved at the moment that he poured the paint on the canvas. . . . The pictorial reality of this painting is the physical reality of the painting . . . the painting <u>is</u> what the artist <u>was</u> at the time he painted it . . . material, technique, form and artist are "one."[5]

According to Bates Lowry, "the complete equating of artist and work is an ultimate phase in the artist's concept of a work of art . . . beyond this point, we deal no longer with a work of art but more with the mind of the artist."[6]

If one were to speculate as to Pollock's stage in "the cycle," the resemblance of <u>One</u> to the scribbles of young children may be of significance. If this "second childishness" were seen as indicative of what Pollock had come to know in his life, the extremity of the abstraction, except for the conscious decision to create it, could be seen as just about complete denial of his "part" on the stage of the world--

I prefer to think of it as a distinction made between what he was while he created it and what he was in day-to-day life--a distinction which was perhaps also made by prehistoric man by entering the secret cave. As was said of the child's scribble, it is presentation rather than representation; something totally his own, created out of completely nothing: zer "o" (see Appendix A).

In her later paintings, part in and part of this world, Grandma Moses' very style begins to dissolve into this nothingness--the immensity of which makes it one of the greatest things a mortal man can know . . . or come close to knowing; such is the perfect context for beginning to learn anything--as did the old woman as she approached the untouched purity of the caves, . . . "sans everything". . . .

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AN ART

The moment we put a pencil to paper we begin, by contrast, to define nothingness. The more "nothing" we know, the better position we are in to learn and express the essentials of anything--the fundamentals--the simple basics, which often become not so simple as we progress beyond the "elementary" levels. In Zaidenberg's words,

> Knowing nothing of "art" conventions, as yet unaquainted with snobbery and chichi, bohemian pretences or artistic ambition, the child's work is pure expression--a treasure vainly sought by most adult artists and rarely achieved by any but the greatest. . . . Somewhere along the route to adolescence most children seem to lose this ability for pure expression.[1]

It is this vision of the beginning artists that I believe makes much of their work worthwhile examples to follow in creating illustrations for instruction in language--also a vehicle of expression. Through her special vision, Moses was

> . . . able to distill from the most mundane sources essences of abstract design and human interest that far transgress their humble origins. . . . [She was] able to extract elements of universal potency that gives popular illustration its appeal by replacing its original stylistic and referential context with her own.[2]

Although often entirely unrealistic, the views expressed in the work of children and primitives "offer simple and directly pertinent instruction"; in the context of the flat picture

space, the visual logic that goes into these creations is "immediately convincing and appropriate."[3]

The secret to a great part of the effectiveness of these works is simple--simplicity. Kurt Budt defines artistic simplicity as "the wisest ordering of the means based on insight into the essentials, to which everything else must be subservient."[4] When one knows nothing, the representation of essentials is inevitably natural. The artist does not go beyond what is needed for his purpose; complex material is organized with the smallest possible number of structural features.

There are a variety of separate elements we can use to construct pictorial signs and symbols in much the same way as a writer combines parts of the written language to produce his method of communication. Nathan Knobler offers the following advice in doing so.

> Anyone wishing to produce a visual symbol for an experience must be selective. From his consciousness of color, light, form, texture, movement and even the non-visual experience of sound, touch and smell, he must choose those few characteristic qualities which suggest the essentials of the reality apparent to him at the time he begins work, Selection of the pertinent aspects of reality is not always a matter of free choice. This choice may be complicated even further if the artist decides that his subjective responses to the world about him are important factors in the "real" world and that they too should be a major constituent of his work.[5]

As with all talents and strong points, an artist may express better with some of these elements than others and thus should consider and experiment with all of them.

Hopefully, this section will provide some enlightenment regarding certain elements we might consider in creating our pictorial language.

Line

The first scribblings of children are essentially controlled lines. As primitive man sought order and balance in the scratches made on the bones of animals he consumed, the innate urge to create order out of the primal chaos begins with these repetitious lines of young children. The same element used to "capture the spirits" on prehistoric rock formations gives life to the veritable contour figures--the "players" on Moses' early "stages," which are also perceived primarily in terms of line.

Every human being creates with line in some form. Consider the jagged lines we make in the air with our fingers to "cross out" something that is not correct. Or the invisible line that "emanates" from the pointing finger to what we are being directed to see. Similar is the function of line for the artist who uses it as his primary element. And the way each artist uses line is as unique as the felt, individual qualities of line in each person's signature.

As in one's signature, lines can be seen as a means to the end of symbolic representation, and/or as part of the message itself. In Arnheim's words, "Any line drawn on a sheet of paper . . . is like a rock thrown into a pond; it upsets repose, it mobilizes space--seeing is the perception of action."[6]

See the lines on the Egyptian glass vase for awhile (Fig. 46). Does it not seem physically easier for our eye to follow the fast, straighter lines that meet at more acute angles on the neck?[7] The simple designs here, through the element of line have the power to make us feel a certain way and in themselves are very effective means of expressing ideas or concepts visually.[8]

In the Japanese painting (Fig. 47), note the powerful role of the thick, rigid and frozen lines in conveying the sense of "winter" in this part of the world.[9] Words alone, of any language could hardly evoke this particular meaning. Even words rely on lines occasionally to convey certain concepts, for example, "straight as an arrow" (in itself, a linear symbol). [10] The extraction of major lines implied by the nature of certain vertical objects has given rise to association with the qualities we have found to exist in them; for example, a "tower of strength."[11]

But written words are also composed of lines and as was earlier stated, "pictures and letters can be said to be blood relations" (Figs. 44, 48 & 49).  actually contains some of the same linear elements as HOUSE, and as in the instance of the word symbol, this pictorial symbol can be combined with others to form a larger unit which will have meaning if there is a pattern to it.[12]

As do our eyes when closely observing the lines of art's nonverbal language, our eyes are now moving along this very line of print . . . but how different the experience.

Fig. 46. Egyptian glass vase (1500-1200 B.C.).

Fig. 47. Winter Landscape (late 15th century, Japanese Muromachi Period).

Fig. 48. The Chinese ideogram for "man."

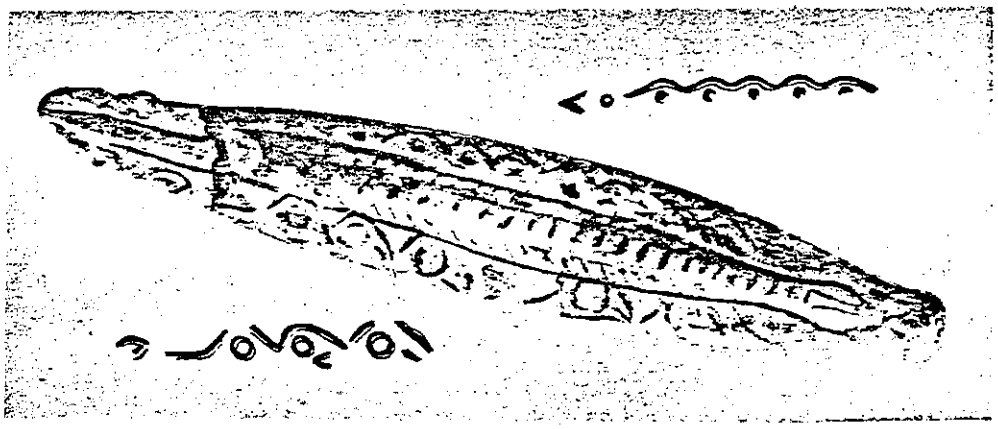


Fig. 49. The Snake of Lortet (Museum Saint-Germain-en-Laye). In this bone we see a band of birds' heads changed into a scalloped line; an example of art, having achieved realism, developing toward schematism.

Shape

As the scribbling rotations around fixed points evolve into the creation of the archetypal "mandalla" shape, line becomes "outline" and begins to take on a whole new added meaning. As we saw in children's drawings, the first shapes to be acquired are the simple ones, combined into simple figures. Used economically, these first shapes produce a sense of unity in a child's drawing.

Prehistoric man's life-giving outline is still a powerful part of the present-day primitive's experience of art. For such naïve respondents, cut-out photographs of persons, done so that paper contour and person contour coincide, are more easily perceived than ordinary photographs.[13] We need only cut out any figure from a magazine page to experience this uncanny transformation (Fig. 50). Line drawings as well "might be expected to be better perceived than ordinary photographs because of the relevancy of the dominant contours."[14]

Outline drawings, which are often little more than simple shapes, are also a feature of American Primitive art. This is clearly seen in Moses' figures, the elements of which were "reduced to simple shapes and filled in with neat, flat strokes of paint."[15]

Even the most advanced artists begin with the element of outline shape, but in more elaborate processes of development, often lose the certain power of evocation found in our elementary artists. In the words of Van Dyke, "it is a common

Fig. 50. Magazine picture and transformed cut-out.

studio experience that a sketch of a picture is frequently better than the picture itself; the attempt to 'finish' (that is, put in all the details and minutices) makes it dull and unsuggestive."[16]

All shape is the form of some content, and, in Arnheim's words, "form always points to something beyond itself."[17] Only when we "see" what is being suggested or pointed at, does a work of art come to life; does it become our experience.

As with line, the perception of shape itself is an active process. Lowry explains that

> The first step in our perception of an object consists of an impression of its outline shape. Because our comprehension of the outline shape of an object is instantaneous, and because it is rarely the sole aspect of our visual experience of an object, we generally are not aware that we have first seen an object in this fashion.[18]

According to Arnheim,

> In the perception of shape lies the beginning of concept formation. Whereas the optical image projected upon the retina is a mechanically complete recording of its physical counterpart, the corresponding visual percept is not. The perception of shape is the grasping of the structural features found in, or imposed upon stimulous material. Only rarely does this material conform exactly to the shapes it acquires in perception.[19]

Thus, the more simply organized a shape or perceptual pattern, the more clearly it differs from its environment, and the more easily it is recognized--as we re-cognize the shapes of the figures in the natural environments of Moses' early scenes.

Probably more than we are conscious of, we use shape to

communicate and convey meaning; the thumb and index finger circle of perfection, sign of the cross and traffic signs, to name a few. There are basic shapes implicit in complicated structures that, when extracted, become symbols.[20] We saw children at very early stages creating their own symbol systems in an economic strive for unity. In Figure 51, a "five-year old child distinguished between masculine and feminine figures through simple outline shapes representing clothing."[21]

Symbolic representations are often more easily comprehended. The three flying angels in Figure 52 are seen "not as individual figures in the sky, but as a group forming a single shape against a background."[22]

> Although the number of figures remains discernable, the artist has merged the bodies, binding them together by a continuous line. This line, in its movement about the figures produces a single form that is so clear and strong that we tend to see the angels as components of it rather than to see the form as a collection of angels. The shape becomes a symbol of the angels' presence, not a description of them.[23]

Symbolic shapes have more meaning in terms of our own experience of them in that we more or less have to re-create them in order to re-cognize them. Through this process these shapes actually become what they represent. Because of this, objects like the Indian knife (Fig. 53) exist for us as works of art.[24]

> The meaning of the form rests solely in the arrangement of shapes that the artist has brought into being. The fact that it may also represent a human figure is an aspect of this object that follows, rather than precedes our visual impression of it.[25]

Fig. 51. "Father, Baby, Sister, Self, Mother." Pencil drawing done by a 5 year old showing use of symbols to represent sexes.

Fig. 52. Pieta (13th century, School of Pisa).

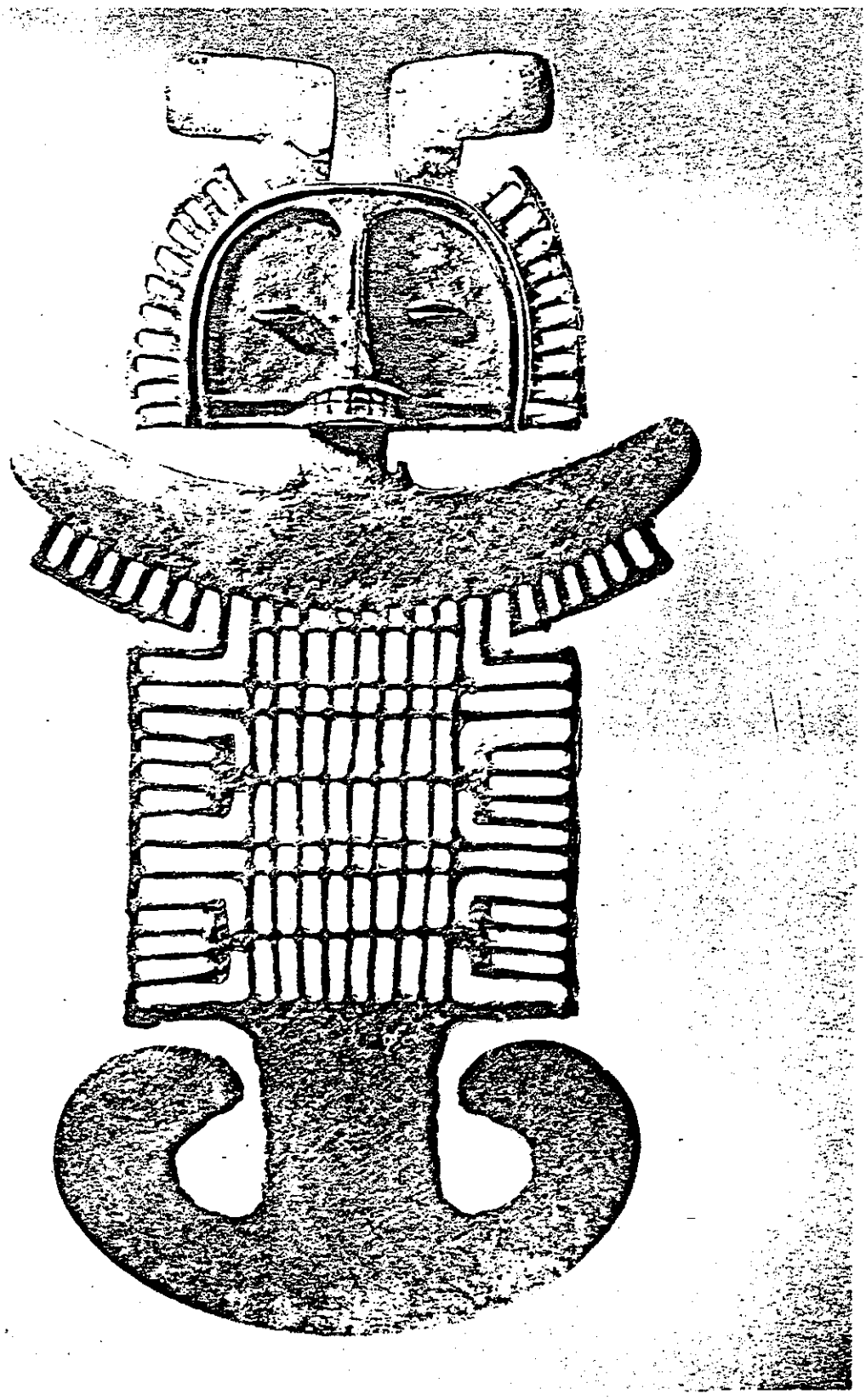


Fig. 53. Chibcha Indian ceremonial knife (before 1500 A.D., Colombia).

Similar to the arranging of shapes in Figure 54 are the most symbolic of shapes: those of letters and words. Although they may contain hints of the corresponding shape image and their derivations, through their evolution, they have lost much of their elucidation of the total image (Fig. 48).[26]

"The shapes of figures often echo the larger form on which they are found" (Figs. 55, 56 & 57).[27] The shape of the drawing surface will greatly influence how an artist distributes the shapes and spaces within the bounding edges of the flat surface. This depends upon how an artist chooses to see an object--primarily as a flat surface or not (I will go further into this in the section on materials).[28]

Regular, vertically-directed shapes appear heavier than irregular, oblique ones and the less clearly-organized the context and the object in themselves, the less clearly can they be separated perceptually.[29]

In Betty Edward's terms, the key components of composition are "positive shapes and negative spaces (or empty areas- Fig. 58)."[30] In the creation of shapes, this empty space itself can be a virtual solid whose shapes and character can be as great a part of what a work conveys as any element. As Alan Watts sees it, "You can never have the use of the inside of a cup without the outside. The inside and the outside go together. They're one." (Fig. 59).[31]

Thus, another reminder of the value of knowing "nothing" in the creation of anything.

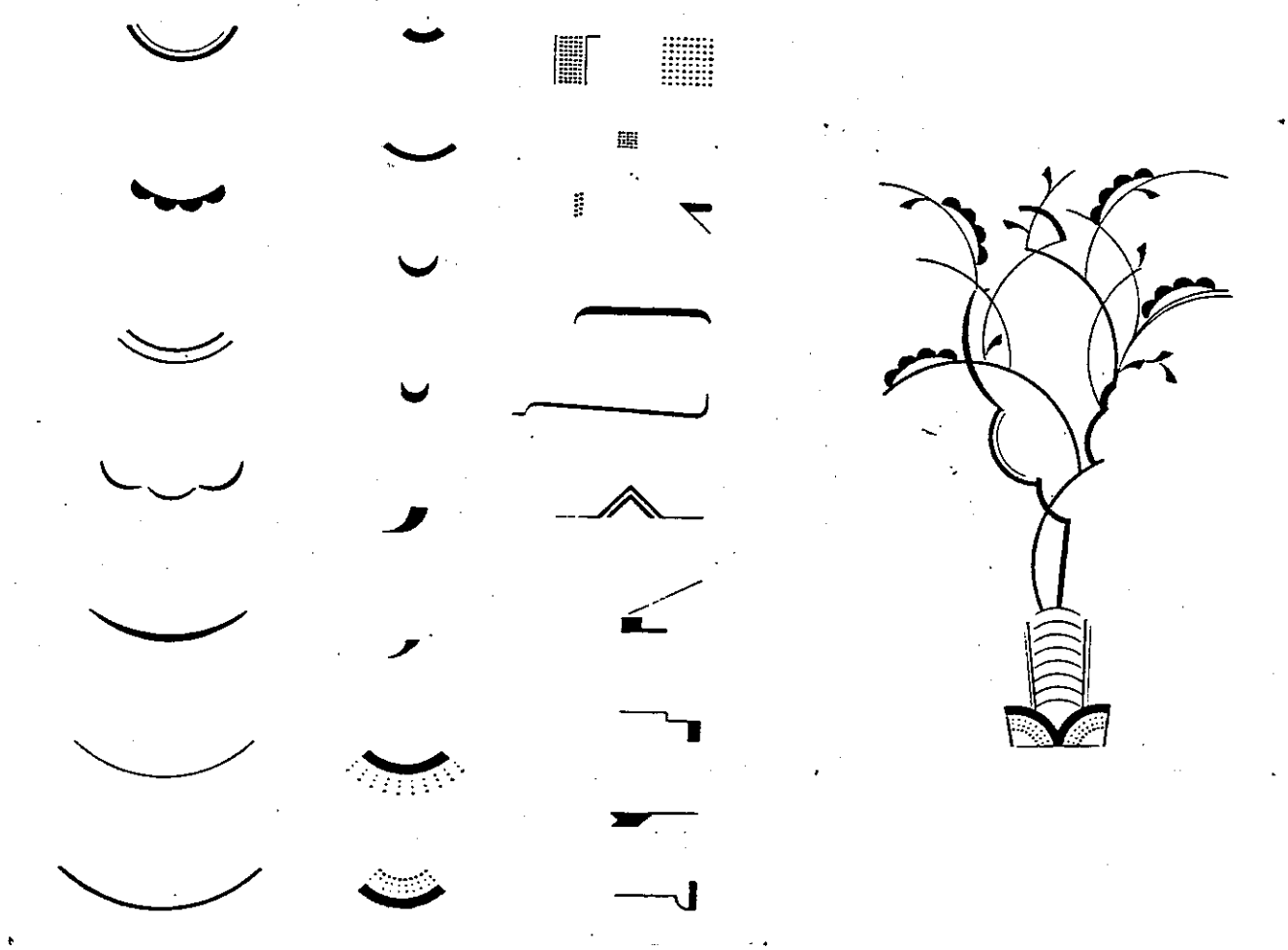


Fig. 54. Specimen page of stencil shapes and ornamental design made out of them by W. A. Dwiggins (about 1927).

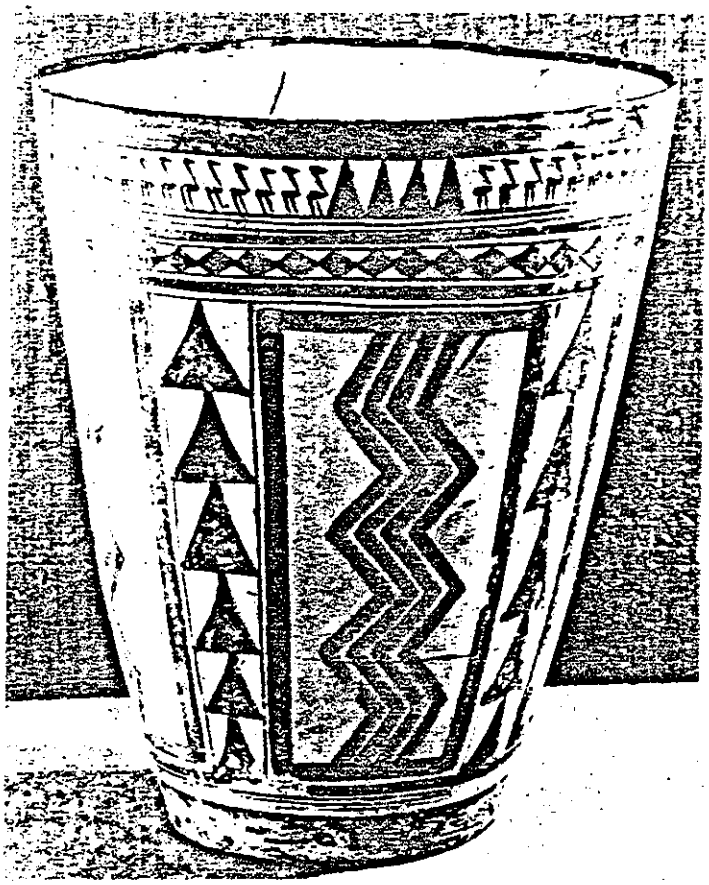


Fig. 55. Mesopotamian goblet (about 4000 B.C., Susa).

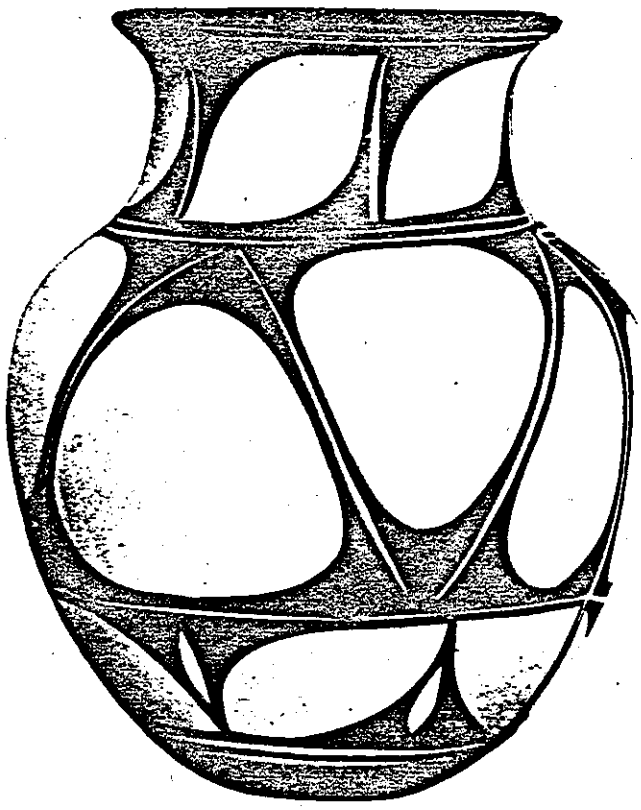


Fig. 56. Santo Domingo Indian jar (19th or early 20th century, New Mexico).

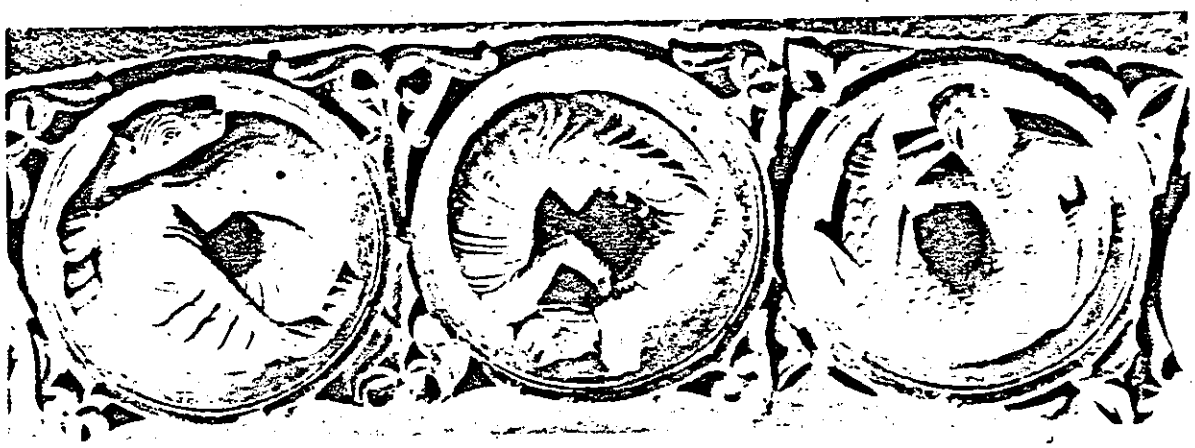
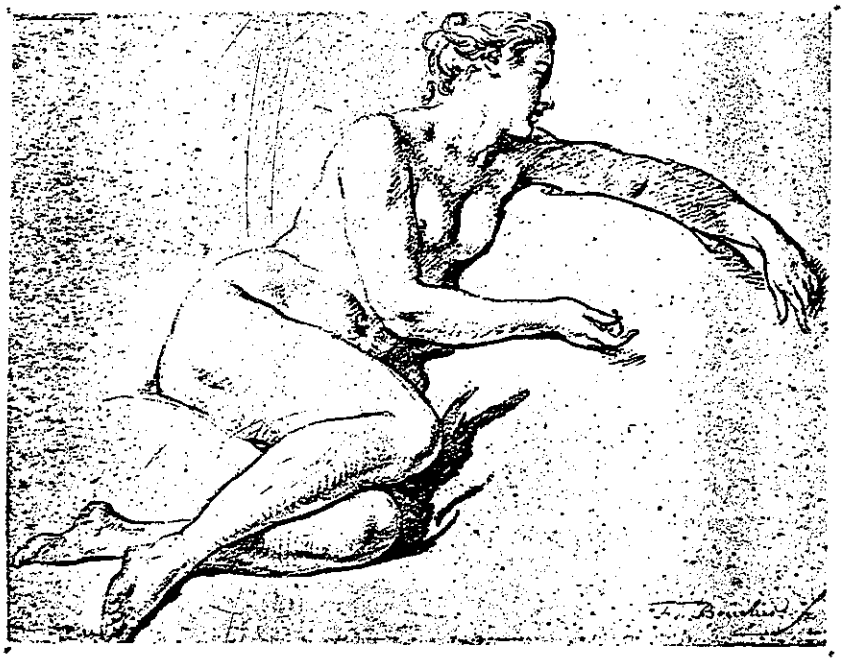


Fig. 57. Dog, Acrobat, Siren, Sainte-Madeleine (12th century, France).



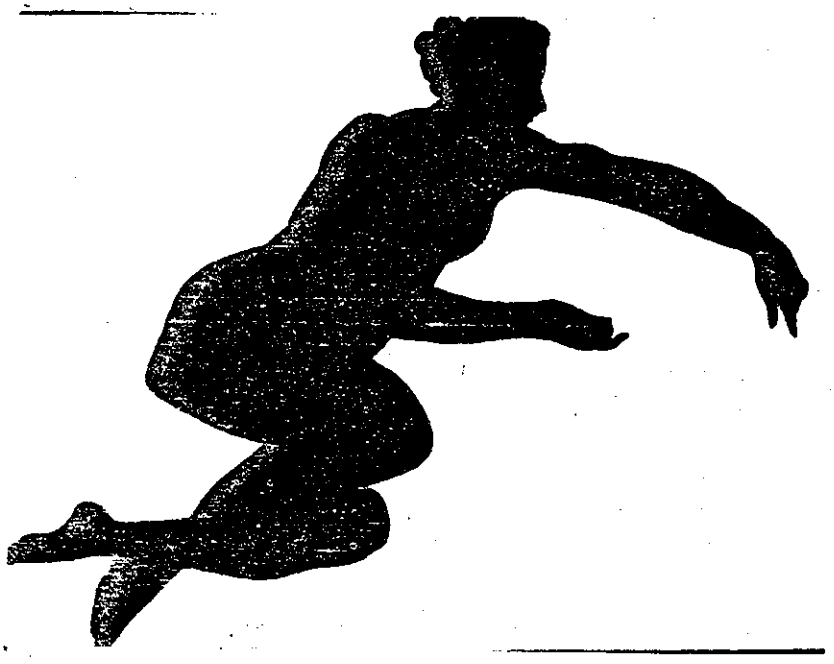


Fig. 58. Positive shapes and negative spaces seen in Seated Nude by Francois Boucher (1703-1770, Rijks museum, Amsterdam).

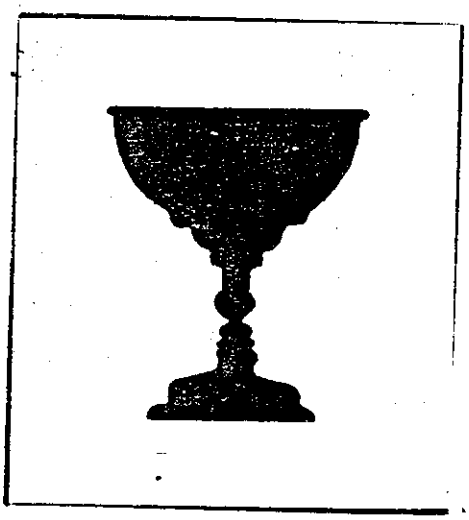


Fig. 59. Double image created by positive shape and negative space.

Color

"In the beginning there was light . . . on the first day, followed by the sun, moon and stars on the third."[32]

As young children create lines and shapes out of nothing, the contrasts of the womb's darkness and the light of day soon evolve into a color spectrum with endless variation. In their art work we can see color arrangement, or "topology" appearing soon after their work with lines, and from a very early age there is meaning in their choice of color.[33] According to Arnheim, "the color one child gives to the trees matches the overall impression given by the trees; we are not dealing with an imitation but an invention."[34]

Colors used by many of the three groups of beginning artists are chosen according to what many call the "primitive color sense"[35]: an instinctive sense of color when transporting mental pictures onto a surface rather than a technical facility for reconstructing observations in color[36]--a sense, which with increased emphasis on the intrinsic qualities of pigment, hue and form, became a major part of the expression of Moses' later work.

It was with line and often color that primitive man "captured" the spirits which appeared on rock formations, the paint, made from ground minerals and charcoal and bound with animal fat, either scraped on with shredded bone or blown through a hollow bone.[37] The most prevalent taste was for brown or red.[38] One view purports that "the color sense has

developed within human history from a more primitive type in which only the red end of the spectrum appeared as colored."[39]

Just as simple lines and shapes are the basis of more complex ones, color patterns are simply elaborations of the pure qualities of the elementary color sensations.[40] With the achromatic black and white on each end, the primary colors are those most completely distinguished from each other: red, yellow and blue. From these we get the secondary colors of orange, green and violet (Fig. 60). But the full range is infinite--not only in terms of hue (the chromatic quality which distinguishes one color from another) and value (the light intensity--from the lowest tone of black to the highest white, Fig. 61), but in that every combination creates its own scale of brightness and darkness relative to what appears in each unique field. "Orange, for example, will appear warmer when it is placed alongside a cool blue than when it is placed against a hotter red; similarly, blue will appear cooler when seen juxtaposed to red than when alongside white."[41] "If a small gray patch is put on a red background, it will look blue-green; if the background is green-yellow, the gray patch will look violet" (Fig. 62).[42]

Of course, the appearance and expression of a color are modified even further by the subject matter, the arrangement of which, altogether creates an impression which might be called "the music of a picture." In fact, language frequently associates music and color in that the two share various terms such as "loud," "soft," "muted," "dull," "harmonic," "scale,"

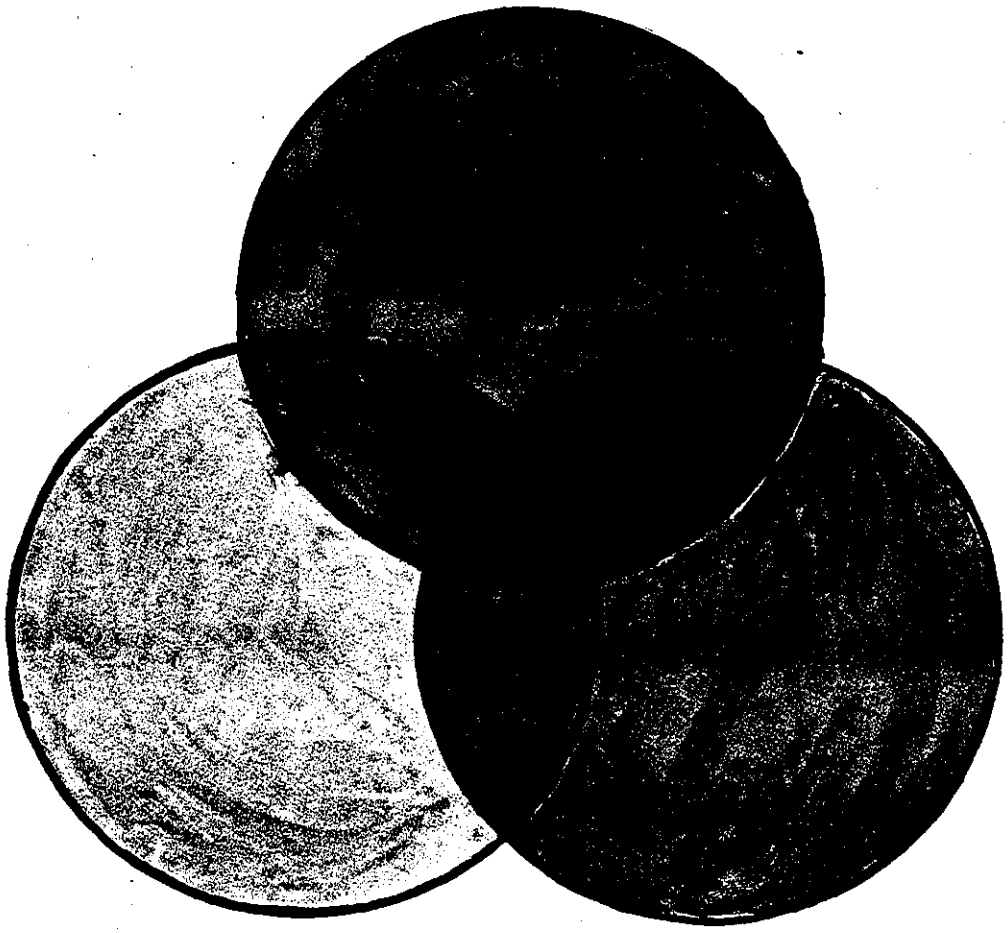


Fig. 60. The primary and secondary colors.

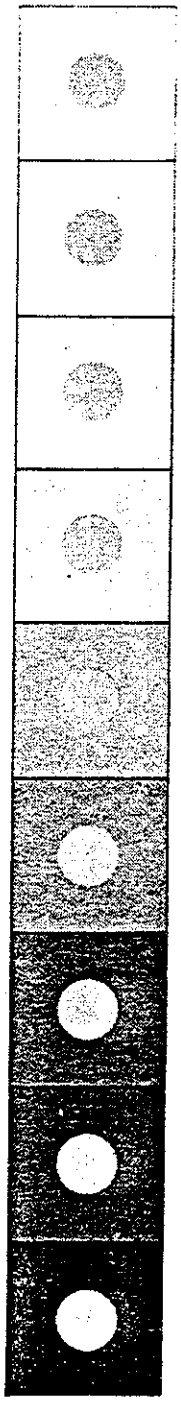


Fig. 61. Value scale.

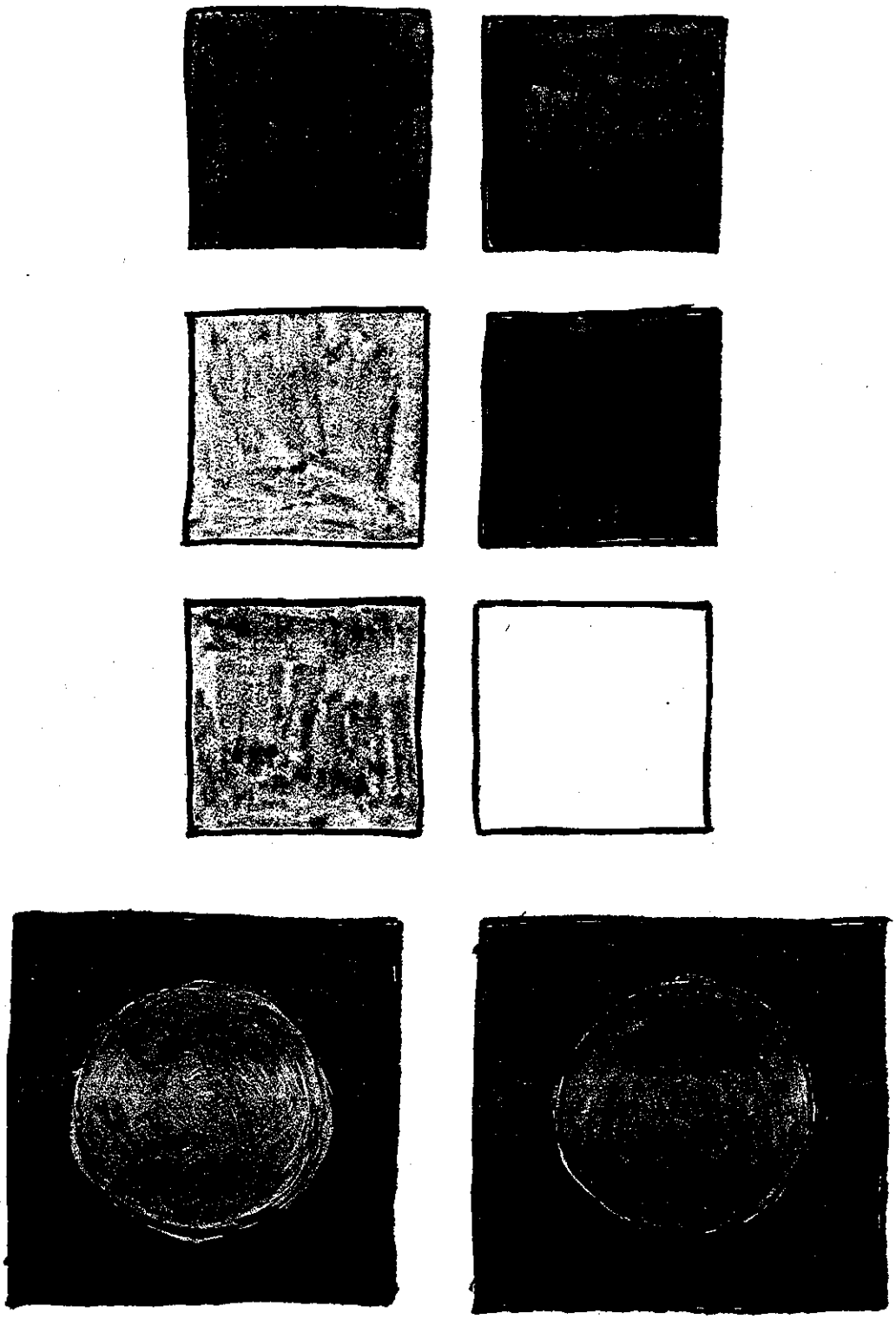


Fig. 62. Color combinations creating their own scale of brightness and darkness.

"tone," etc.[43]

As with music, the experience of color closely resembles that of affect, or emotion. According to Arnheim, shape, "male and noble," corresponds to intellectual control and although a more efficient means of communication, cannot obtain the expressive impact of color.[45] Often due to association with diverse experience, the effects the music of color will have on the observer vary from person to person. If asked our favorite line or shape, chances are that we would answer far less readily than if asked our favorite color. Still, a large part of color experience does seem to result from cultural conditioning--the use of black for funerals and white for weddings being the other way around in certain Asian countries, for example.

There even appears to be differences in the perception of color in different countries, for example, the rates for red-green color blindness are generally lower for more primitive groups.[46] According to R. C. Gregory, "the most common color confusion is between red and green. . . . nearly ten percent of men are markedly deficient, though it is extremely rare in women--less common is green/blue confusion."[47] One could assume from the Physical Environment of Peoples Hypothesis that the environment in which one becomes cognitive of the color spectrum would also have some influence on one's perception of it regarding the predominance or absence of certain colors--the greens of the jungle and lack of them in

cities, for example.

The issue of culturally-varied classification of the color spectrum has been the longest and most sustained research history in the culture and perception area.[48]

> Although the divisions are culturally arbitrary, . . . in all phases of the one hundred years of study, there has been disagreement as to whether genuine differences in perception were ever demonstrated or whether these were merely differences in color vocabulary. . . . Color perception is very difficult to test because of the very rapid adaptation phenomena, . . . The issue is still not resolved.[49]

Despite the fact that the perception of color is probably the most emotional part of the visual process, certain experiments have demonstrated an actual bodily response to color. Where some tests show blue light tending to lesson activity and produce a state of restfulness, where red often excites the nervous system to the point of irritation,[50] others show that because, as far as the eye is concerned, red possesses the longest wavelength and thus the lowest frequency, its sensation is much quieter than that of blue, with its short wave length and corresponding high frequency.[51] Again, much of this is most likely also affected by association with our experience, our way of seeing and view of the world.

As was said earlier, all color patterns are seen as elaborations of the elementary pure qualities of yellow, red and blue, and we see all colors in relation to these. As our eye tends to relate similar colors, we automatically reassemble the three primary colors from their various hues and values.

Red is said to focus sharply (recall the red spot on the mandible of the herring gull), whereas blue, a spacious color, does not; the square and the circle being their respective equivalents in shape.[52] Red, yellow and orange, the "warm colors," advance while the "cool colors"--blue, green and violet recede, the bright colors being heavier than the darker ones.[53]

The various hues and contrasts between light and dark evoke a vast number of sensations in themselves. This also is reflected in various languages with terms such as "clear as black and white."[54] Strong contrasts, whether of hue or value, tend to attract our attention immediately while gradual changes seem to lead us progressively from one step to the next as we re-cognize the scene before us. Again, the colors of each unique field create their own value.

According to Arnheim, the eye seeks out and connects complimentary colors.[55] Stare at the red surface (Fig. 63) for awhile and then switch quickly to the following blank page; the "negative after image" of blue-green is complimentary to red.[56] When one color is presented, the eye tends to call up its complimentary to achieve completeness; when combined, complimentary colors trap all light, producing dark gray or black.[57] The most effective distinction between hues is brought about by this clash (mutual repulsion), resulting in a completeness as the balance of opposites--and "the eye demands completeness."[58] Arnheim attributes this experience of balance and completeness to an underlying kinship with white.

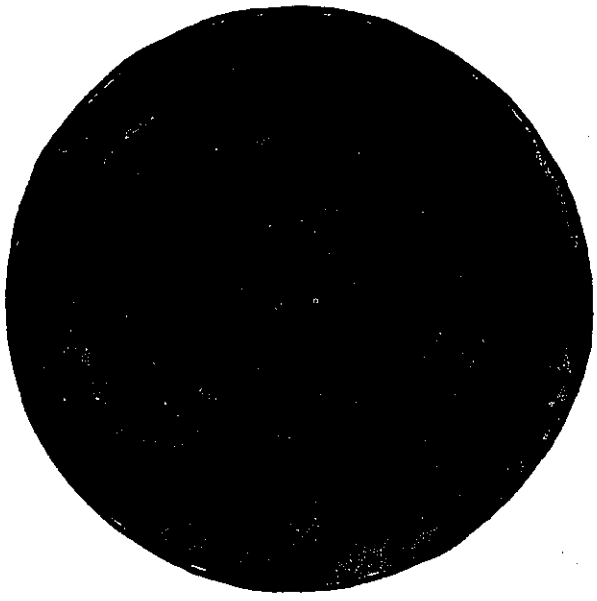


Fig. 63.

> White is completeness and nothingness. Like the shape of the circle, it serves as a symbol of integration without presenting to the eye the variety of vital forces that it integrates and thus is complete and empty as a circle.[59]

Or, in the words of Paul Gauguin, "Color, which is a vibration as music is, can express that which is the most creative and at the same time the least definable thing in nature: its inner force."[60]

Perspective

One of Webster's definitions of "primitive" is "an artist who does not use the techniques of perspective, shading or the like in painting."[61] As we can see in the primitive cave paintings, one of the main characteristics is the predominance of the side view of the animals. According to Albert E. Elsen,

> Foreshortening was a difficult concept for the artist, and the frontal view would also have meant the visual and perhaps magical loss of the main body and hind legs of the animal. It was from the side that the most distinctive features of the animal--so important for magical purposes--were rendered.[62]

Objects were most often represented in profile or full face in American Primitive painting. Lack of correct perspective and flawless three-dimensional modeling is replaced by emphasized contour lines and sharp colors. We can easily see that Moses' figure drawing is primitive and her sense of perspective is without known rules. (Fig. 64).[63]

In the drawings of young children, who are least likely to know, or be concerned with rules of perspective, we can

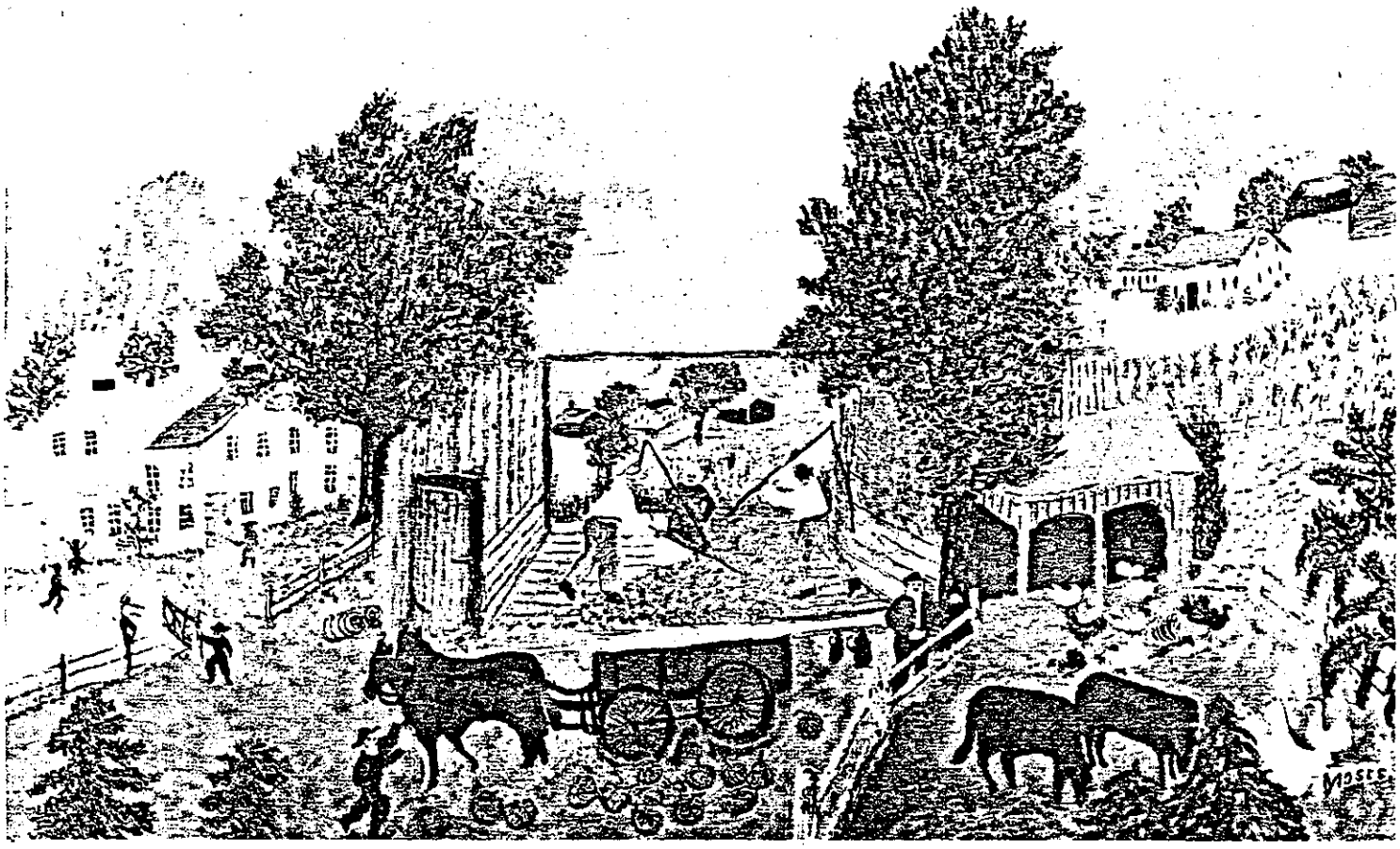


Fig. 64. Pumpkins by Anna Mary Roberston Moses (1959).

most clearly see this elementary view of the world. The eyes of the child, knowing nothing of established art conventions or even basic laws of physics, see with an innocent directness.[64] Where the adult brings a large supplementary store of apriori knowledge to an image reflected on his retina, thus conditioning his eye to an unconscious translation of simple linear images to a highly complex picture, what is uppermost in the child's mind and obvious in his visual interpretation is the meaning of the present experience of the object.[65] As greeness may represent the color impression given by trees to the child, any formation and placement of vertical lines may represent forest, whereas the adult will usually be more concerned with precision in details such as bulk, weight, proportion and diminishing size to show distance.

Perspective as we know it in Western art is actually a rather recent invention, which first appeared during the Italian Renaissance. Its laws and principals were first clearly described by Leonardo da Vinci in his Notebooks, where he treated the perspective of drawing as a branch of Geometry.[66]

When an artist employs geometrical perspective he represents his retinal image, giving the true geometrical perspective a camera does.[67] But as was said earlier, the retina is merely a mirror which receives the initial impression of a scene or object and its perspective plays a rather small part in seeing; looking and recognizing, but not the full perceptual experience of re-cognizing in the re-creative sense. "We do not 'see' the world as it is projected on the

retina or a camera" and it should be no surprise that "primitive people make little or nothing out of photographs."[68]

As with color, certain perceptual organizations are characteristic of cultural groups. Referring back to the Chinese and Western paintings of Figures 7 & 8, note the Oriental technique in which placement from bottom to top indicates position in space. The scene has a feeling of completeness, existing in almost timeless suspension-- and we experience it in this way. In this system, which is also often used by children, the forms at the very top of the page--regardless of size--are considered to be the farthest away.

The Western painting, on the other hand, indicates distance with the commonly-used "vanishing point"; a technique where the composition recedes convergingly in a linear process of things getting smaller with part of the scene, like the future, ahead of us and unknown.

The term "perspective" comes from the Latin word "prospectus," meaning "to look forward"--the system most familiar to those of the West being linear perspective.[69] As the different techniques in Western and Oriental art indicate, on both an individual and cultural level, to "put something into perspective" can be very different processes.

Movement

"For the greatest grace and life that a picture can have is that it express motion, which the painters call the spirit of a picture."[70]

Without even being aware of it, one can be "moved" by a work of art on various levels; be it an emotional association, the re-cognition of actual locomotion or in the dynamic physical and mental act of perceiving elements of the work itself. In its strongest form, the spirit of movement is experienced on all three levels.

Through a natural movement of the arm, the first, purely expressive lines of children soon evolve into the shape of the primal circle (Figs. 65 & 66). Through this innate sense of stability and balance, we also saw how primitive man sought order in scratches on bones by rearranging them symmetrically.

To be cognizant of these and other line formations, the eye and mind must retrace them, physically and mentally re-experiencing the very act that created them. Such is the process of "seeing" the energetic, life-giving outline shapes as well as the vital subjects of prehistoric art (Figs. 67 & 68). In S. Reinach's words,

> Perhaps the most extraordinary trait of all [in the artist of the Reindeer Period] is that he is in love with life and movement; he likes to represent his animals in lively and picturesque attitudes; he seizes and reproduces their movement with extraordinary precision.[71]

There is also movement in color, as seen in Moses' figures--always rendered with a few plain "jolts" of pigment (Figs. 69 & 70).[72] In Rainbow (Fig. 43), we see the conceived outlines gradually giving way to figures rendered solely in terms of paint and color.[73] As our eye moves from

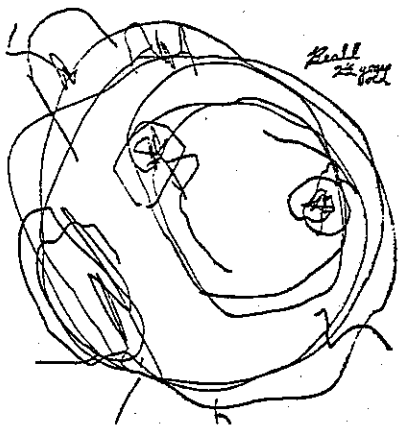


Fig. 65. Scribble drawing by a 2½ year old showing a natural arm movement.

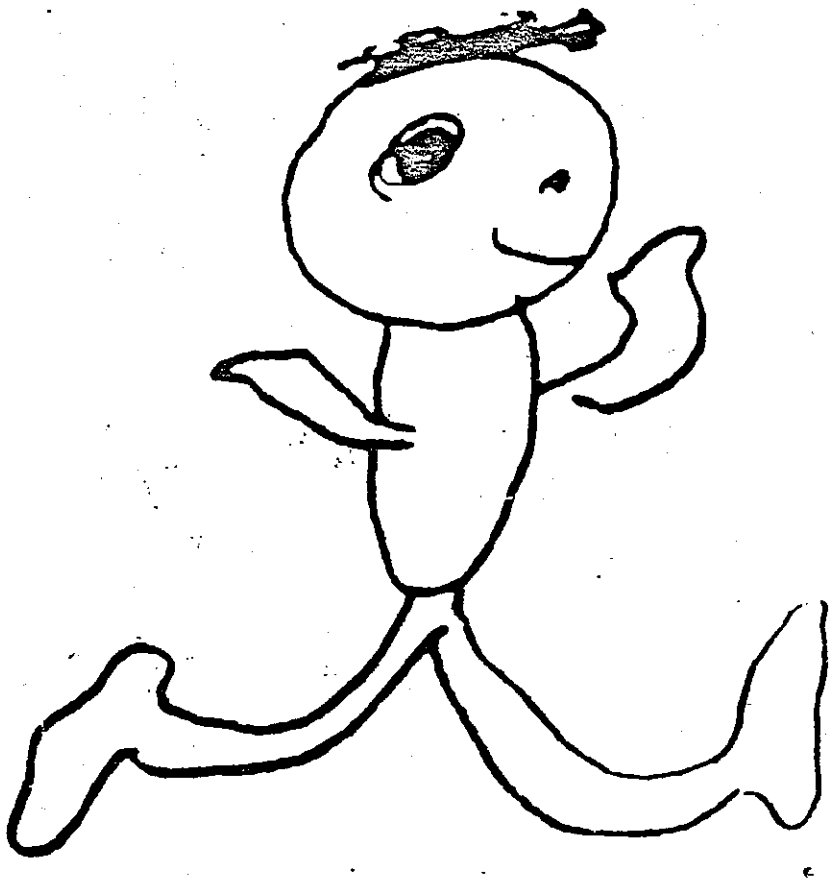


Fig. 66. Movement expressed in a child's drawing.

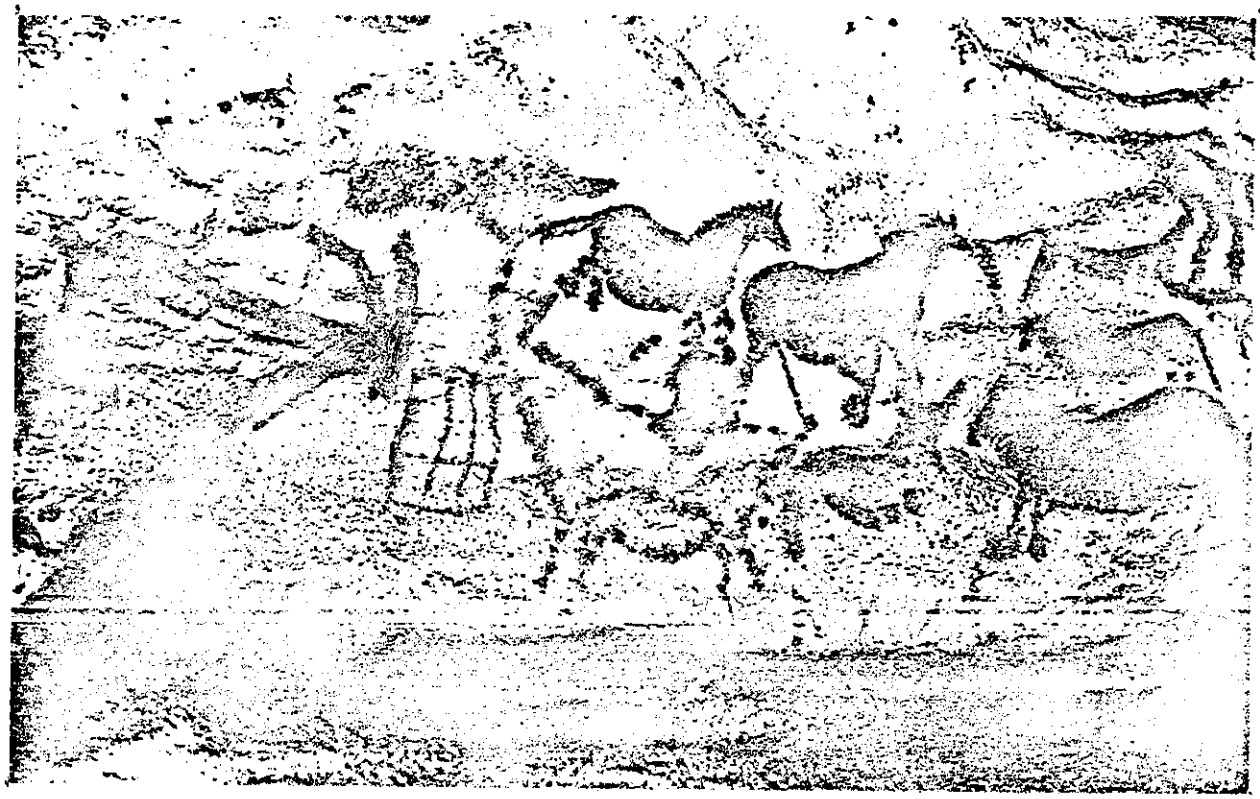


Fig. 67. Section of the Freeze of Little Horses.

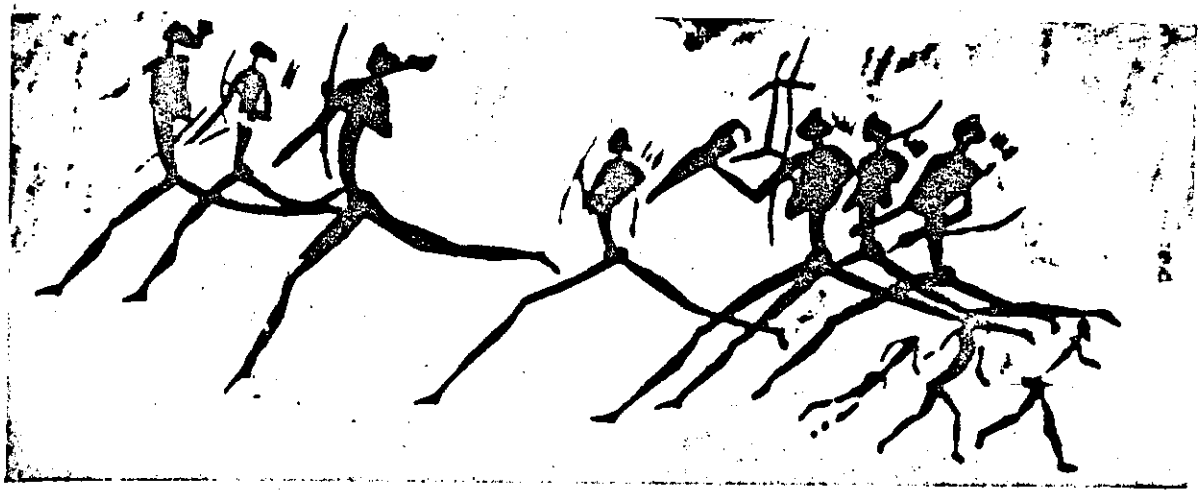


Fig. 68. Running Figures (Basutoland, South Africa).

Fig. 69. Movement in the strokes of paint with which Moses rendered her characters as seen in detail of A Beautiful World by Anna Mary Robertson Moses (1948).

Fig. 70. Movement in Thunderstorm by Anna Mary Robertson Moses (1948)

color to color, from points of greater to lesser contrast, or through marked sequence, we see and experience yet another aspect of the rhythmical harmony within which the figures exist.

A work of art "lives" according to the relationships the artist allows us to see among the various parts of his work. "To the sensitive eye, the simplest picture--a dark spot on a light ground--presents the spectacle of an object expanding from its center, pushing outward, and being checked by the counterforce of its environment" (Fig. 71).[74] Not only are the shapes of things dynamic, but also that of the negative space which is compressed and compresses in turn.[75]

Regarding movement in pictures, Arnheim purports that

> In perfectly balanced compositions, shapes do not stablize each others locations, but look as though they wanted to move to more suitable places. This tendency, far from making the work appear more dynamic, produces the painful effect of paralysis. Shapes look frozen, arrested in arbitrary positions. The dimension of time, which does not belong in the immobile arts, has been introduced and creates a false interpretation.[76]

In Van Dyke's words, "the truth of life and motion is a greater truth than the truth of momentary rigidity."[77]

According to Arnheim, movement is the most powerful visual appeal to attention.[78]

> A dog or cat may be resting peacefully, unimpressed by all the colors and shapes that make up the setting around him, but as soon as anything stirs, his eyes will turn to the spot and follow the course of the motion. . . . Human beings are similarly attracted to movement.[79]

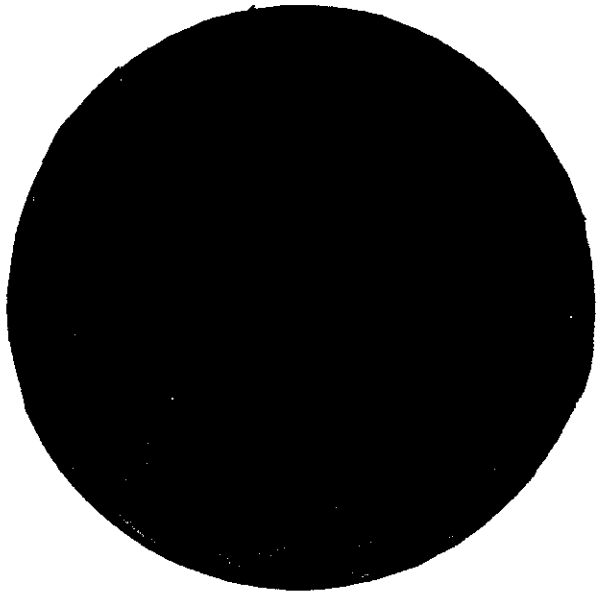


Fig. 71.

Every visual object is a stimulation-- an action upon us that results in action within the nervous system--"as long as light affects the brain center of vision, the pushing and pulling keep going on, and the relative stability of the result is nothing but the balance of opposing forces."[80]

From the waves of the ocean to the tiny line a snail leaves behind in the garden, as in the spinning of the planets, the blood flowing through our veins, there is movement everywhere we look . . . in everything we "see."

Materials

Those with young children are well aware that they will use whatever they can get their hands on to draw on any surface within reach. Although often unfortunate for those around them, the child's eagerness to experiment with all sorts of materials is something that would benefit artists of any level of proficiency; as materials used are also important expressive elements in the creation of a work.

We have seen the importance of the surface on which prehistoric man created, using bones and the fat of the very life-sustaining animals his artistic goal was to ressurect in this sacred communion.

Most American Primitive artists were without access to professional equipment, and such technical liabilities often resulted in the special features of their works, such as a compensating emphasis on design.[81] Moses used a match to render fine details; for the tiny eyes and mouths of her figures, she

used a straightpin.[82] It was only after her patrons saw to it that she had better brushes and paint that her new-found expression in color emerged.

Although the style of representation used by a specific culture or individual artist is as important a part of one's medium as the physical properties of materials, what we use to create with and on, in itself is often a powerful source of inspiration as well as part of the observer's experience of the work. In Lowry's words, "because different materials have distinctive properties that affect the appearance of a work in different ways, our experience of the work is directly conditioned by the kind of material the artist uses."[83]

Although not necessarily part of the total expression in works of art, the objects on which they are created possess different potentialities (Figs. 55, 56 & 57). As in the development of images suggested on primitive rock formations, the divisions of a surface, and arrangements of shapes on it can grow out of an "intuitive response" to the surface.[84]

As regards drawing materials, an example serves to illustrate the differences our choice can make. In Figures 72 & 73, the character of the lines is due largely to the qualities of the different types of pens used to draw them. "In each case, the artist responded to the feel of the pen" and allowed its qualities to greatly influence the content of the drawings.[85] According to Lowry, "the choice of the material is part of the fusion between the idea and the form,"[86] but "whether the artist is inspired by the material itself, or

Fig. 72. Dancing Figures by George Romney (about 1775).

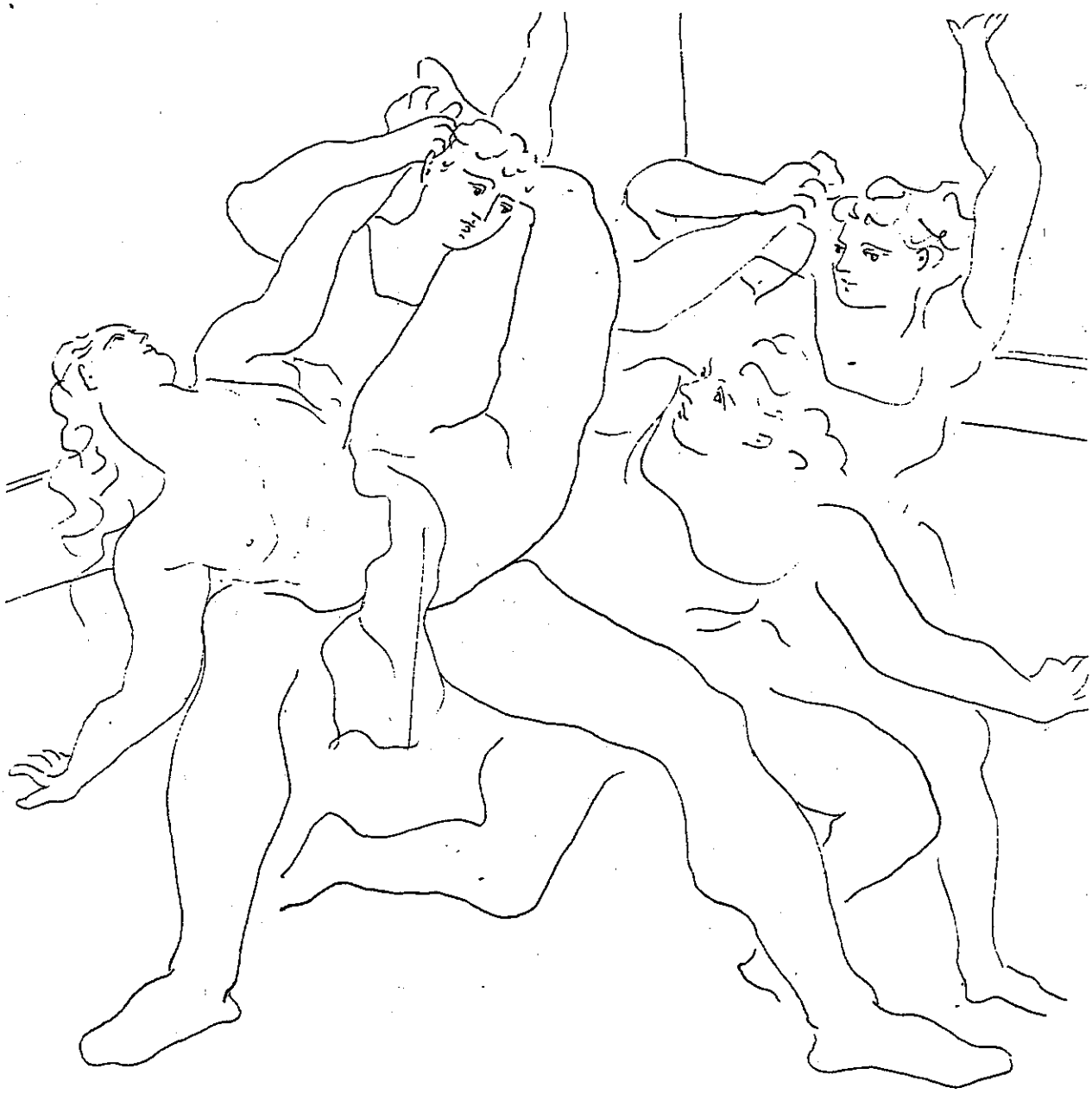


Fig. 73. Dancers by Pablo Picasso.

chooses the material because it fits his idea, is not a distinction that should be obvious from his work."[87]

The number of kinds of materials we can create with is infinite; the choice almost necessarily our own. Van Dyke offers the following advice regarding our selection.

> The materials and their application to the best advantage are always to be regarded. Why waste effort in cutting glass when you can blow it? Why chisel curtains in marble when you can weave them in cloth?[88]

And, as regards materials used for language instruction,

> Why tell sequential stories. . . . in paint when it can be done more easily in writing? And why describe landscapes in writing when you can do it so much better in painting?[89]

Composition

In Latin, the term "composition" means "putting together" various elements into a unified whole.[90] In his arrangement of lines, shapes, colors, figures, objects and empty areas within a frame, an artist "harnesses the wild profusion, the lack of selectivity that differentiates nature from himself."[91]

As can be seen in the drawings of prehistoric man and young children, a lack of concern with total composition is not uncommon. Most or all of their attention is given to the figures or objects in their drawings.

The fact that the cave painter tried to assimilate man and nature through participation in his environment more than differentiating nature from himself or imposing his order on

nature (recall Dr. Minkowska's sensory and rational human types) is illustrated by his choice of nature's own canvas--the walls of her caves--for the context of the animals he, with line and color, so simply "re-presented." Only that dark, empty circle within which he lost himself served as a frame for his miscellaneous works.

Similarly, the only boundaries of younger children's drawings are the constraints they set for themselves in their thrifty use of units, creating sequential patterns with the limited equivalents of things they know in life (Fig. 21). The parts of objects and figures children draw become wholes and then parts of larger wholes, as their view of the world becomes more complex.

Many of the works of American Primitive painters show this more "advanced beginning" stage in composition. Each unit of a painting seems to exist separately as in the series of "memory images" in the artist's mind, and these images appear to have been combined, rather than synthesized into the whole picture.[92] The works are like collections of the simple prehistoric and children's figures displayed (usually) on a natural background. Unlike the observation of the academic picture with its optical unification of the whole scene, the spectator's eye more consciously travels from one item to another, accumulating bit by bit their relationships to one another and the whole scene as the artist constructed it.

Arnheim defines a "part" as "a section of a whole that under the given conditions shows some measure of separation

from its environment."[93] In many American Primitive paintings, the parts, not having been so blended into the whole, are more "re-cognizable". These parts, usually closer to the sensory type artist's work are in balance with the whole, which is usually closer to the rational type's.

Recall Arnheim's description of perception of an object as finding a "sufficiently simple graspable form in it." The same is true for recognizing representational concepts needed for picture making. The simpler the pattern, the easier the task,

> The less clearly organized are the context and the objects in themselves, the less clearly can they be separated perceptually. In other words, perception can abstract objects from their context only because it grasps shape as organized structure rather than recording it as a mosaic of elements.[94]

Regarding the creation and organization of representational concepts,

> A thinker must subtly control the relations of his concepts to the matter for which they stand. In order to acquire sufficient generality, these concepts must transcend the particular aspects of the experiences from which they are taken. But in spite of their abstractions they must continue to reflect the relevant features of their referents.[95]

Although, perhaps due to the previously-mentioned theme of man's conquest of nature in American Primitive painting, the figures are often in some way separate from the natural background, they are still usually subordinated to the requirements of the landscapes. This is clearly seen in Moses'

earlier paintings-- veritible collections of primitive and childlike figures which eventually merge with their context in her later style. Moses' figures are not "intrinsically life-like, but are rather given life by their painted surroundings and their interaction with each other."[96] In the total composition, "the little vignettes serve to anchor the landscape," while the accuracy of the landscape makes the characters more real."[97] The viewer is invited to finish the stories, many of which are in some way universally familiar to "the folks" (Figs. 74 & 75). In John Dewey's words,

> In a work of art, different acts, episodes, occurrences melt and fuse into unity and yet do not disappear and lose their own character as they do so--just as in a genial conversation, there is a continuous interchange and blending, and yet each speaker not only retains his own character but manifests it more clearly than is his want.[98]

The way in which an artist combines the various parts into the whole work is another expressive element by which he may convey a feeling or idea. As Lowry describes it,

> Our eye re-creates for us, as it were, the process that the artist went through in establishing the balance. As it does, we perceive a sense of order in our movements that we associate with the sensation of rhythm produced for us by music. This experience can be initiated for us simply by repetition or variation of the shapes within a work of art. We have a tendency to see as related those objects which are similar in shape, color, value or subject. . . . Since the organization of a work of art is necessarily a part of its expressive content, each work has its own unique composition.[99]

Technical factors that determine balance in a composition are related to weight and direction.[100] These are affected by

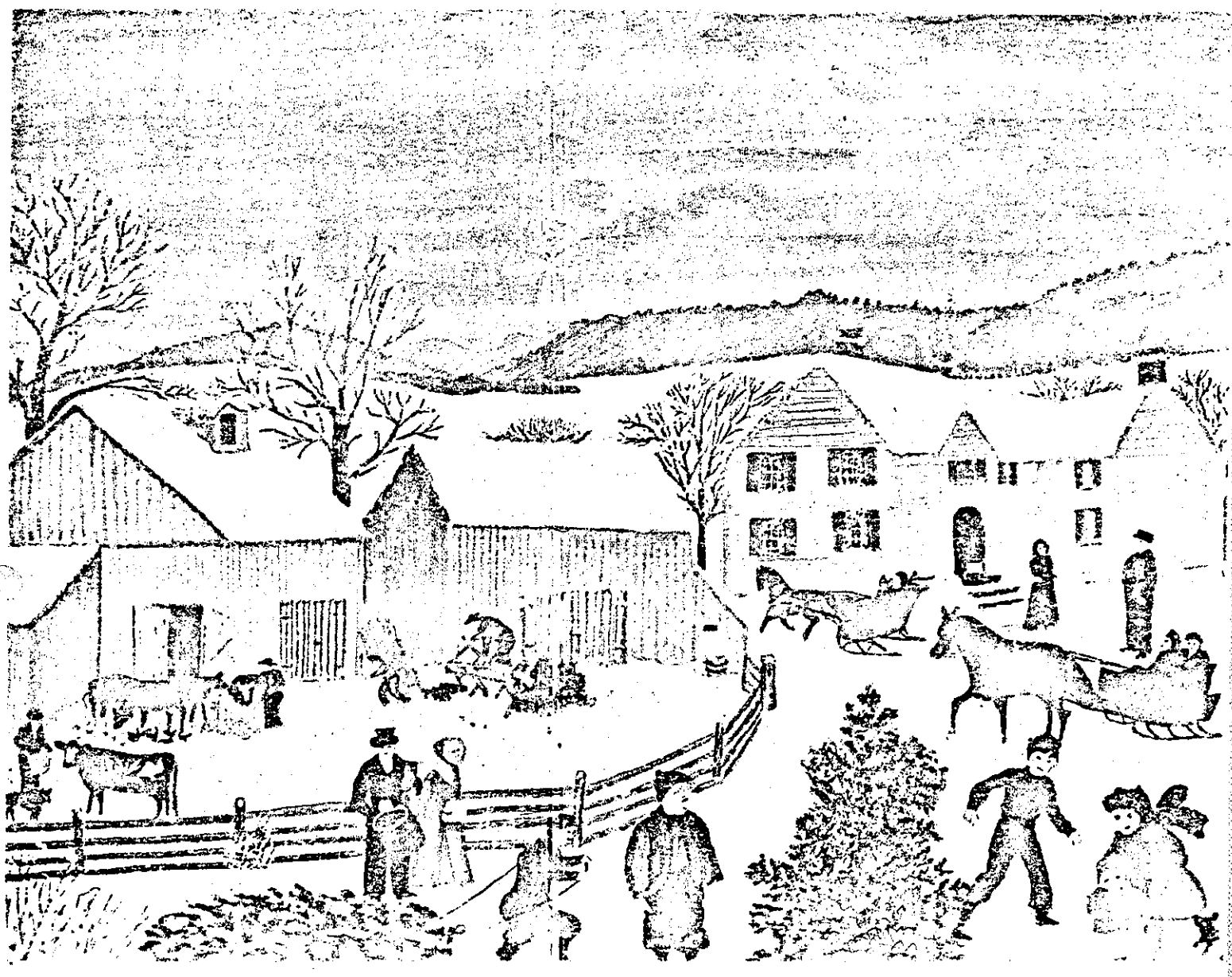


Fig. 74. Bringing in the Christmas Tree by Anna Mary Robertson Moses (1946).

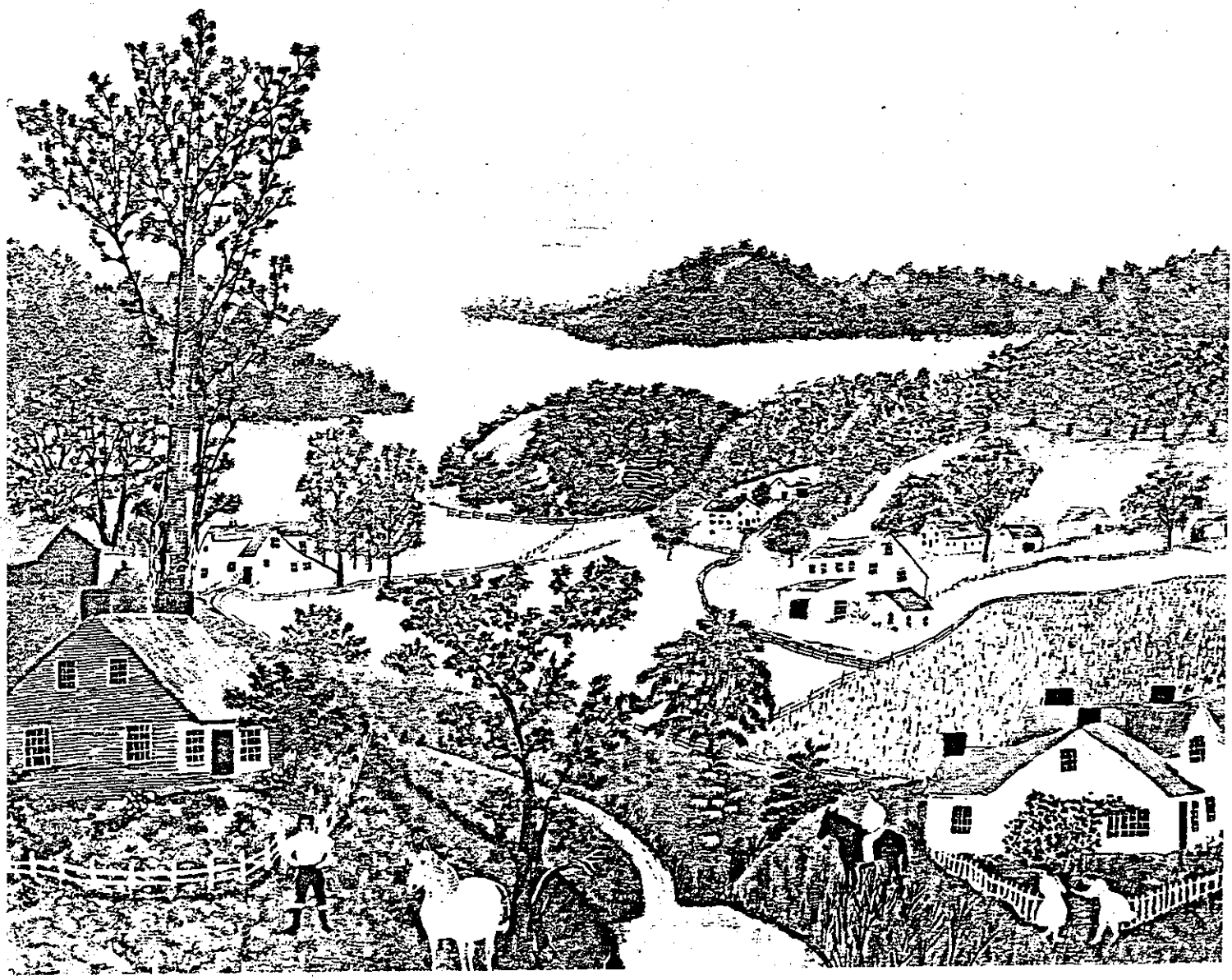


Fig. 75. A Beautiful World by Anna Mary Robertson Moses (1948).

location, size, shape and color. Centrally-located areas assume greater importance. This increases with compactness, or concentration of mass around its center. Objects in the upper part and right area are heavier than those in the lower and left. Objects farther away or isolated have more weight. Larger objects and regular shapes will be heavier than darker ones. Dark areas must be larger than light ones to counter balance them. The shape of objects creates axes and these axes create directed forces. Vertically directed forms appear heavier than oblique ones. [101] Because pictures are "read" from left to right, the direction of the diagonal that runs from bottom left to top right is seen as ascending, the other as descending. Thus, all pictorial objects will look somewhat heavier at the right side of the picture.[102]

Arnheim calls a work of art, and all that it entails

> . . . a statement about the nature of reality. From an infinite number of possible configurations of forces, it picks and presents one. . . . compositional balance reflects a tendency that is probably the mainspring of all activity in the universe. Art accomplishes what can never be realized by the overlapping strivings that make up human life.[103]

Together, all the elements that go into a picture are as parts and solos in the symphony of composition. As with a sheet of music, it is the observer's visual task to play the score which brings it to life; the total rhythmical harmony depending upon both the creator's arrangement and the re-creator's ability to re-cognize. Such was the "seeing" task of my students in Mexico.

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BEGINNING WITH PICTURES

"Great art creates its own standards and can only be judged in terms of what it sets out to do."[1]

As I see it, much of the greatness in the works of the three groups of beginning artists we have looked at lies in the simple fact that they drew things as they saw them. And it is their way of seeing that makes me think them excellent examples to follow in creating pictures for beginning language classes.

In themselves, the works of an artist do not say anything. Obviously no flatly-surfaced piece of material with pigment on it has life--but we often experience them as if they do. An ancient Chinese once said of his experience gazing at the scenery of Sho and Shung,

> I realize
> I am all of a sudden
> Part of the landscape.[2]

It is in the mind of the observer who really works at seeing that meaning emerges--and this is where our beginners most effectively utilize nothingness. The more left to the observer to re-cognize and re-create, the more vital the experience of the work, and ultimately the more simple the realization of

intention. A sign with the name of a place and an arrow on it will be of more help to us than a detailed description of the place it is pointing to.

In retrospect, what I set out to do in teaching English to beginning-level language learners was to see things with the direct vision of the beginner and convey what I saw with images, before using words, as "to see," the poet Paul Valery said, "is to forget the name of the thing one sees."[3]

In Arnheim's terms, "the part of the concept which the eyes can see directly is limited in verbal representation to an almost totally arbitrary sign or complex of signs whereas the visible picture contains more elements of portrayal."[4] Allowing my students to "re-cognize" the pictures in their own way and then attaching spoken and written words was an invitation to experience the living language through participation in the creation of its meaning.

Every time we see a word we know, we go through a similar recognition process. As I have already mentioned, most words are actually composed of the same elements as pictures, but in a more advanced form of abstraction (Figs. 13, 41, 44 & 45). "There is evidence that language at first consisted solely of images; only gradually did it achieve the bareness required for abstraction; similarly, when writing made its appearance, the process of differentiation was slow."[5]

> The people who executed hieroglyphics knew nothing of the refined cultural activity we call "art." To them it was another means of talking. . . . Script evolved as a

> quicker symbol system and the common practice of drawing lost its direct, daily usefulness and became relegated to the less immediate uses of decoration and finally, as in our time, a specialist's "cultural activity."[6]

Like pictures, words are symbolic representations, the original connotation of "symbol" being "to throw together"--"to unite."[7] Our recognition of words we know is simpler only in that we have heard, spoken, written and read them again and again until our understanding them becomes an unconscious process. "From childhood on, we learn to see things with words,"[8] but "seeing comes before words--a young child looks and recognizes before it speaks."[9] Encouraging students who are already in a form of this elementary state, regardless of the language being used, to "see" pictures of what words represent in conjunction with the learning of the sounds and letter combinations is a much more meaningful and permanent form of learning a foreign language.

Pictures do not explain--meaning is not found in what they say, but in what they "are"--in Arnheim's words,

> Language is no avenue for sensory contact with reality--it serves merely to name what we have seen or heard or thought. . . . The inborn capacity to understand through the eyes has been put to sleep and must be awakened. This can best be done by handling the pencil, the brush, the chisel.[10]

Every picture is a statement about something--"a means of communication by which one can reach everyone, a method of 'speech' which knows no national boundaries or racial barriers common to the spoken or written word."[11] Drawing itself is a

type of language and "our lines, marks and smudges are to our language what letters are to a writers; but words are not things; the name of a thing is not the thing itself."[12]

> At best, mental images are hard to describe and easily disturbed. Therefore, drawings that can be expected to relate to such images are welcome material. . . . Pictorial representations are suitable instruments of abstract reasoning and point to some of the dimensions of thought they can represent.[13]

In order to help my students see what the written language more abstractly symbolizes I had to re-create it in a simpler pictorial form; to devise a system. "The artist who initiates communication must use a system that is adequate to say what he has a need to say about experience, and if he can not find an existing method of visual communication for the job, he must devise one."[14] Like the written alphabet and rules of grammar, I wanted my pictures to be ordered in a way that my students could learn to "read" them easily enough so that they were indeed aids, rather than hinderances to language learning.

My main criterion for the pictures I drew were that they "suggest" rather than define what they represented, thus allowing students to participate in the creation of the meaning. Suggestion "implies two people in the work of art rather than one. The spectator must do his part as well as the artist. The latter suggests, the former takes up the suggestion and builds upon it."[15]

In themselves, the pictures are merely points of departure--arrows pointing in the directions I wanted my students

to look and see for themselves. "The picture does not present the object itself but a set of propositions about the object; or, if you prefer, it presents the object as a set of propositions."[16] In Huyghe's words, "Painting does not explain; it is and shows what it is; it is up to us to experience it through its capacity for being communicated."[17]

I have found that certain drawings represent more suggestively than others. These works are not replicas but "equivalents" of the original.[18] The units chosen are based on structural aspects that are the essence of its form and underlie our recognition of it.[19] The nature of this type of representation is illustrated quite clearly in the works of the three groups of beginning artists I have discussed, various qualities of which make them what I believe to be very helpful examples to follow in designing this type of picture: the cave paintings, which began as suggestions themselves (Fig. 11), the child's way of subordinating technique to expression (Fig. 22) and the American Primitive's story-telling through contextualizing (Fig. 36), for example. To a large extent, all three are unspoiled by technical tricks, "shorn of superficial manual dexterities and academic conventions."[20]

One of the strongest features which makes these works inspirational in creating pictures which easily involve the viewer through suggestion is their simplicity. The simpler the picture, the sooner the "re-cognition" and we can get on with the learning of the more abstract representation of the language for the object or concept. As Arnheim describes it,

"Simplicity may be defined by the degree of tension that a phenomenon creates in the experience of the observer and in the related process occurring in his brain."[21] "Confrontation may single out, highlight and purify a particular quality"[22] and "the elementary form patterns carry the core of meaning."[23] As wrote T. S. Eliot ". . . and the unseen eyebeam crossed, for the roses had the look of flowers that are looked at."[24]

Some of the main ingredients of this simplicity are economy, control over detail and consistency. It is clear that the beginning artists, especially prehistoric and children, did not go far beyond what was needed for their purposes. "In an absolute sense, a thing is simple when it consists of a small number of structural features; in a relative sense, a thing has simplicity when it organizes complex material with the smallest possible number of structural features."[25]

In many of these works, details which were considered unimportant were left out.

> In the beginning, the written character was a pictorial sign that developed out of the gradual schematization of drawings which were originally intended as representations. Here, as elsewhere, the tend toward abstraction eliminates details, simplifies, tends toward the geometric, the diagram (Figs. 41, 44 & 45).[26]

It is impossible to look with equal attention at a scene with a great variety of details. In Franck's words, "The eye that follows the sweep of the earth intuitively selects hillocks and clumps of trees that define space, it picks up and leaves out forms, details; drawing here becomes the art of leaving

out."[27] If the artist has been consistent though, details are perceived harmoniously, with the parts more easily perceived both as separate entities and as elements of a whole composition (Fig. 76). "Any organized pattern is a carrier of meaning whether intended or not."[28]

Maintaining this consistency was another primary concern in the development of my pictorial language and also underlies the very order in which I have discussed the beginning artists in this paper. In general, prehistoric and children's art is more limited and specialized, with most of their attention lavished on the objects, persons or forms in their drawings, where much of American Primitive art shows a concern with total composition. Like certain primitive art, children's drawings and even the figures in Moses' more contextualized paintings, the consistency of the units, of and within (eg. lines, shapes and colors) the sets of "building blocks," resulted in sequential patterns that made recognition easier. The resulting economy made them simpler to perceive and learn language through; both within themselves and in the "context pictures."

As I mentioned, the more complex pictures Moses painted are actually like collections of the simple, primitive figures placed in a context where they each have a special role to play--they are combined on a background in ways that add meaning to what they represent in themselves. Because of their simplicity, while being separate parts, they do not distract, but rather fit into the whole scene. The consistency in this type of representation makes Moses' paintings like stories that

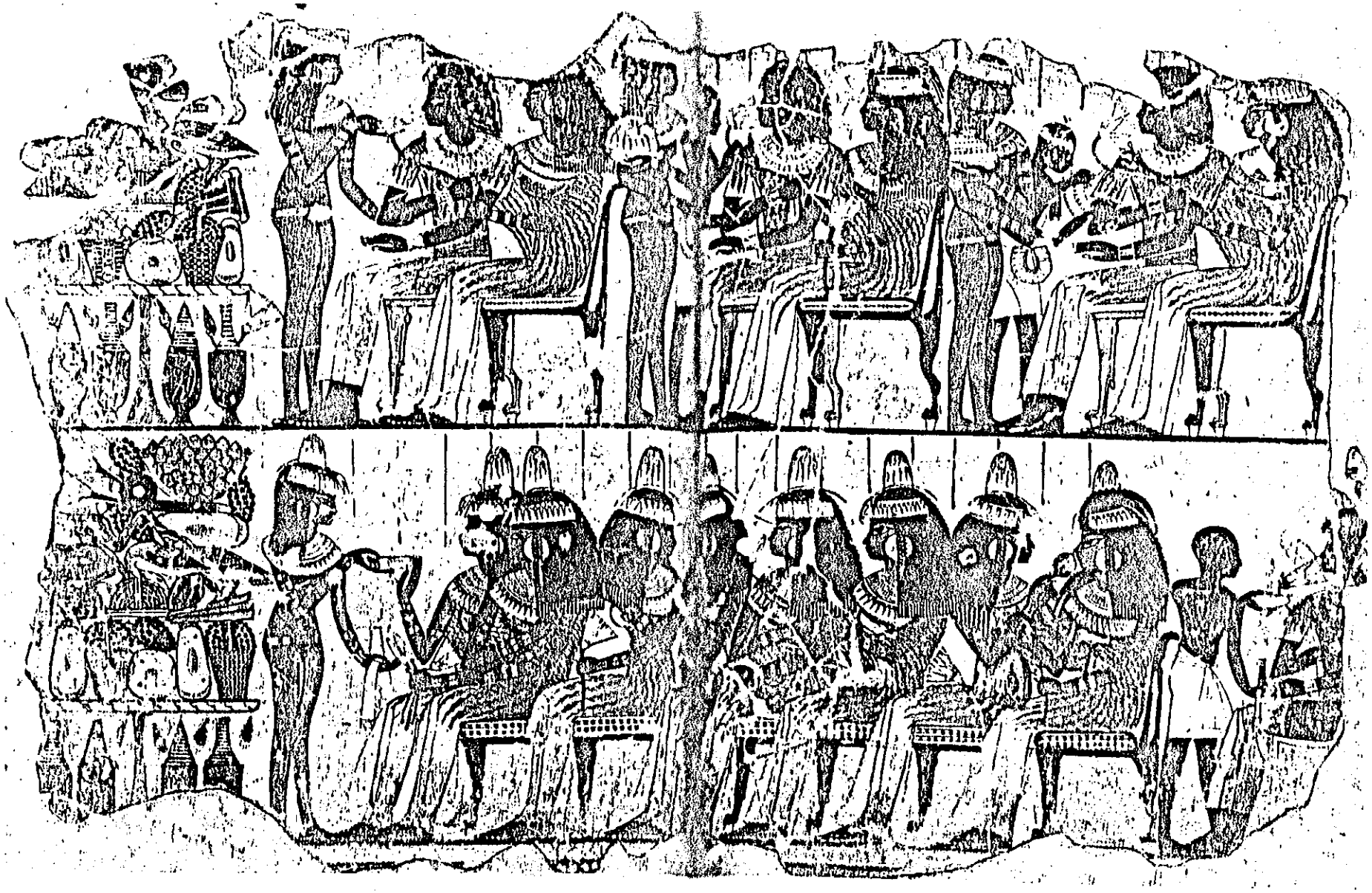

Fig. 76. An Egyptian scene demonstrating consistency in a work of art.

become easier to read as we become more familiar with her way of seeing. In Lowry's words, "The more the language of visual forms becomes our own, the closer we approach the point where the very idea of the artist can also be said to become our own."[29]

In the same way, letters and words are combined and re-combined into sentences which comprise the whole of language. The "building blocks" of my pictorial language represent words. By combining and re-combining them with new ones they, while retaining their own meaning, become parts of sentences which in turn are all combined and re-combined in the "context pictures," which present language as a whole. Being simple and consistent in bringing my students through this evolution with readily-re-cognized forms was of major importance in using them as aids in the meaningful acquisition of a foreign language.

Still, what is simple to one may not be so to another, and there are various extraneous factors to be considered in devising pictures, as in any aid to assist learning in general. I believe it is of great importance to know "where your students are coming from" on every level. This is of course much easier if you are residing in their country. Simply getting out and "seeing" the various aspects of their surroundings is a first step. The Inventory of the Visual Environment (see Appendix B) can be of help in determining how they have learned to perceive in terms of predominant lines, shapes, etc., as certain perceptual organizations are characteristic of cultural groups (recall the Physical Environment of Peoples

and Carpentered World Hypotheses).

Along with taking note of the obviously different forms, such as houses and furniture, this will be beneficial in learning what type of picture will be more difficult for students to re-cognize; not that this should have too much influence on the drawing of them--I am the product of the culture in which the language I am teaching has evolved--and it is important that students become aware of my way of seeing as well. According to Segall, "Drawings probably reveal little about intelligence or personality, but do reflect cultural traditions. . . ."[30] In Franck's words, "Just give the eye a little time to overcome its panic, to calm down . . . for alien forms do not stay alien very long--the exotic does not exist except on travel posters."[31]

I tried to embody in myself the attitudes of my perceivers as well though. The importance of devising pictures which suggest lies in the fact that students must be involved in the realization of images through experiencing their meaning as they see them in order to re-cognize them.

If  became  in the mind of a Mexican student in order for her to know what it and HOUSE represent, the picture has served its purpose. In Arnheim's words,

> The expression of an object is not inherent in the visual pattern itself, what we see provides only clues for whatever knowledge and feelings we may mobilize from memory and project upon the object. . . . Artistic expression requires that the communication of the data produce an "experience."[32]

However, "one audience may require a great deal of documentation before recognizing or accepting a drawing, while another audience may be, in Ernst H. Gombrich's terms, more ready to 'take a hint.'"[34]

"In the arts, the person confronted by a new experience must place it in an orderly context with the experiences he has had in the past."[35] I quote this in reference to both the past of a student's total experience and his experience thus far in my language class. Thus, there is a need for creativity and consistency in repeatedly using and re-combining drawings students have learned to "read" and label with English (the arrangements of building blocks in the context pictures), the patience to accept the fact that change is difficult for most people and to allow students to re-cognize according to their own experience.

It is also useful to see to what degree students are of the rational and sensory type (Figs. 27 - 29) regarding our tone of communication through pictures. This can best be found in the drawings students do for themselves--which leads back to my way of using pictures as aids in language learning.

As has been seen, in prehistoric times, "pictures were not just something nice to look at, but something powerful to use."[36] When learning words in class, only when I saw that my students had re-cognized a picture did I give the English word, or "title" it. This was an important part of the process of binding the image to the word, as once a work is titled, we tend to see it as it is described by its title from that point on.

This is where I saw the permanance in the marriage of image or concept and word, rather than language to language translation. Allow an example to illustrate. How do you see this painting described as:

Fig. 77. A landscape of a corn field with birds flying out of it.

and . . .

Fig. 77. The last picture Van Gough painted before killing himself.

Is it not difficult to see it in the first, or any other way after receiving the latter information?[37]

As I mentioned in the beginning of this work, to draw something is a new way of seeing it, and my students did as much drawing as I did. In fact, every time they "saw" something I drew, they were assigned to draw it in their notebook as they saw it for homework--next to the English word only. This was the "title" of their picture. Reading and writing came only after listening and speaking.

The procedure may seem a bit arbitrary with the teacher creating the images and "titling" them, but we must keep in mind the condition of the true beginner. In Jeffrey Schrank's words, "creativity is seen most clearly in those least civilized, . . . infants [for example] are by necessity, totally creative; they have not yet been taught how to handle new situations so they create their own solutions."[38] Being in the fortunate state of knowing "nothing" regarding the foreign language (a definite aspect of being "civilized" in the culture in which it evolved), the experience of everything the beginning language learner beholds must be created in order to be perceived.

Even if students re-cognize and re-create in their own drawings the images just as the teacher has drawn them, humans can never make exact duplicates. Each person has creative ability and "imitation is often the mother of creation."[39] This also applies to the initial repetition of the sounds of words. It is placing the sounds, letters, words and sentences--

the parts, into the whole of language that presents the greatest creative challenge for students. In Schrank's words,

> The most creative writing ever produced by human beings is nothing more than an alphabet in disorder. . . . The creative person can almost be defined as a habitual rearranger and connector, whether of words or ideas, pictures, sounds, devices or images.[40]

The place for language as a whole in my use of pictures is the "context picture." As in Moses' paintings, the context gives meaning and authenticity to the content.

> We constantly make statements that describe things in relation to their environment. An object is seen immediately as having a certain size, that is, as lying somewhere on the scale between a grain of salt and a mountain. Similarly, every object is seen as having a location. Seeing something means assigning it a place in the whole: a location in space. . . .[41]

Providing this space for my students with the context pictures gave them the chance to use language they had learned creatively and freely yet with the referential security of context. Allowing a context to develop where each student <u>had</u> a place she or he could fill with whatever he or she was experiencing at the time gave them the chance to use language when they were ready to use it meaningfully.

In a sense, every context is also part of another context--on and on in circles to infinity . . . or "nothingness"--which brings me back to the beginning--a most suitable place to end this work--a main purpose of which has been the creation of a sort of context in itself; a space within which to think about what we can learn from what we "see."

I will be pleased if the time spent with this paper has increased the reader's awareness in any way that might benefit his or her language teaching and "picture of life"--both of which, in my opinion, are inseparable.

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[33]Erwin Panofsky, Meaning in the Visual Arts, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1955), p. 14.

[34]Ernst H. Gombrich, as quoted by Jacqueline Goodnow, p. 17.

[35]Knobler, p. 49.

[36]E. H. Gombrich, The Story of Art (Great Britain: Phaidon Press LTD., 1967), p. 28.

[37]John Berger, Ways of Seeing (London: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 28.

[38]Jeffery Schrank, Deception Detection (Boston: Beacon Press, 1975), p. 100.

[39]Schrank, p. 102.

[40]Schrank, p. 103.

[41]Arnheim, p. 10.

CONCLUSION

The deeper I went into these areas I have explored, the more fascinating they became to me. As a result, this work became far larger a "context" than I had ever intended. In fact, I have had to recapture my own beginner's mind in order to bring it to a conclusion. In regarding it all as a gathering of knowledge, the process of which I discussed in the section "The Cycle" (which marks the very center of this study), some "truth and reality" that I must abstract from it is in order at this point.

The study of perception, other beginning artists and the components of pictures, which my teaching experience in Mexico led me to has helped me to determine those qualities which I feel make effective drawings to aid basic language learning, and to better understand how and why they do so.

Pictures done with natural simplicity: economy, lack of detail, and consistency, suggest rather than define or describe. They are engaging focal points that help students direct their creative energy toward meaningful understanding of what language represents; while they associate their own corresponding images as they know the concepts, they experience themselves in the pictures. And each context can create a new experience.

I believe that anyone can create in this way--in fact, the closer one is to the elementary level regarding academic training, the closer he is to the essentials, and often the more simple the realization of the intention of his work. I suggest experimentation with each element I discussed in "An Art" to find the ones you work best through yourself (as well as seeing how meaningful these can be in the works of others). An African tribe has a saying "If you can talk, you can sing--if you can walk, you can dance." If you can write, or even just hold a pencil, you can certainly draw.

Given a similar class and situation in the future, I will draw and use pictures in much this same way, with even greater zest for experimentation--but most important, with a greater awareness of what I am doing from intention to technique, and the effect it is having on my students regarding their reactions and responses--all the while remaining in touch with the beginner within.

Due to this closer proximity to the essentials--the simple basics--and lack of a great accumulation of arbitrarily-prescribed "shoulds" regarding how the world is pictured, beginners (artists, language students, language teachers, etc.), given the right context, are freer to see and express through and for themselves. As a result, they are usually more aware and thus tolerant of individual differences in their process of collaboration. Perhaps this also was part of why my students and I, all in the same boat regarding training in each other's languages and drawing, had such good communication. Of course

that chemistry which makes every class unique contributed--it may never happen again this way for me.

Perhaps it may not even have continued in this class, regarding the way they were learning. Beginners become intermediates and although it is useful to remain aware of "whence we came," if we are going anywhere, we have to move on.

Still, when learning begins as a creative process resulting from a discovery or arrangement of things within oneself, I believe it will always be with the learner. I feel that my beginning students got a solid foundation from which to proceed in learning the whole language. And in this sense, knowing where we began is essential in getting to where we are going.

I have not thought a great deal about using pictures in this way at more advanced levels, but do not feel it would be as practical as a primary method. Letters and words were invented for this stage of the cycle. My pictures were largely abstractions from things my students could see but not express with words. Language at advanced levels is often for those things people cannot see but can express in words.

Still, at all levels, I will find it useful to keep the function of language in mind--to always regard it as a vehicle for what it expresses. At no level in a foreign language classroom should it be treated as an end in itself, rather than a means for the person using it. In this way, keeping the beginning in mind: where the utterances came from . . . what we all are, in the beginning, and in the end, is of great importance to me.

APPENDIX A

Nothing

"It takes a long time to understand nothing." -Edward Dahlberg

"Tis pleasant, sure, to see one's name in print; A book's a book, although there's nothing in't." -Byron

"Thou hast seen nothing yet." -Cervantes, Don Quixote

"One truely understands only what one can create." -Giambattista Vico

"As for me, all I know is that I know nothing." -Socrates

"Nothing can be created out of nothing." -Lucretius

"Nothing can come of an artist that is not in the man." -H. L. Mencken

"We brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out." -Epistle of St. Paul to Timothy, 6:7

"Nothing begins and nothing ends." -Francis Thompson

"There is nothing new except what has been forgotten." -Marie Antoinette

"I've got plenty of nothing." -Ira Gershwin

"You aint seen nothing yet." -Al Jolson

"Nothing is more real than nothing." -Samuel Beckett

from The Nothing Book

APPENDIX B

The Environmental Inventory

Questionnaire and Sample Description

I. INVENTORY OF THE VISUAL ENVIRONMENT

This form permits various details of the visual environment to be recorded. These details will be examined carefully as an essential part of efforts to interpret the findings regarding extent of illusion. The topics included on this form were selected for their relevance to several major viewpoints in current theories of perception, some of which suggest that obtained differences in illusion-extent might correlate with differences in visual environment (see discussion in *Materials* booklet).

(1) Experimenter..... (2) Group .....
(3) Location ..... (4) Major occupations.....
(5) Degree of acculturation to EuroAmerican ways. Judged to be:

.....

none slight moderate considerable complete

The Natural Visual Environment

A. Land vistas (Indicate degree to which the categories below are adequate descriptions. Attempt to estimate the proportions of typical visual experiences during childhood.)

(6) a. Dense jungle, no horizon.....
b. Horizon sometimes .....
c. Flat land, frequent horizon .....
d. Horizon always .....
e. Horizon, if visible: straight ..... hilly .....
f. Indicate maximum distance usually visible .....
g. Comments .....

B. Vistas over water

(7) a. Near open sea, lake ..... Navigable? .....
b. Near river..... Navigable?.....
c. No water .....

(8) Containers (pots, vases, boxes, etc.)
   a. What approximate percentage of tops are in horizontal plane? .....
   b. Are there deliberate departures from horizontal tops? ..... Estimate the percentage .....
   c. Estimate percentage which possess *angularity* in cross-section .....
      Precise rectangularity ....., rough rectangularity ....., deliberate nonrectangular angularity .....
   d. Estimate percentage which are *non-angular* in cross-section .....
      Precisely circular ....., roughly circular ....., deliberately elliptical .....
   e. Describe other containers if above categories not exhaustive .....

(9) Tools
   a. Estimate percentage having right-angle junctions ....., imperfect right angles ....., deliberate non-right angles .....
   b. Comments .....

(10) Dwellings and other buildings
   a. Estimate percentage that are perfectly rectangular ....., imperfectly rectangular ....., deliberately nonrectangular, but possess angularity .....
   b. Estimate percentage that are perfectly circular ....., roughly circular ....., deliberately elliptical .....
   c. Describe roof styles .....
   d. Comments .....

(11) Furnishings
   a. Describe, noting particularly angular characteristics (perfect right angles or departures therefrom) and whether furnishings tend toward rectangularity or circularity in cross-section.
      .....
      .....
      .....

(12) Graphic and plastic arts
   a. What are the approximate percentages of occurrence of the following representational art forms? Murals ..... Sculpture ..... Bas relief ..... Paintings .... Drawings ..... Others .....
   b. In what approximate percentage of two-dimensional works is three-dimensional space represented? ..... How?
      .....
      .....
   c. Comments .....

(13) Contours and edges
  a. Are edges of objects sharp ..... or rounded .... at points of junction.
     To what extent? .....
     Describe .....
  b. Comments .....

(14) Homogeneity of color
  a. Estimate percentage of objects of one color ....., multicolored ....., any single surface in one color, but several colors on whole object .....
     Describe .....
  b. Comments .....

(15) Do games or serious occupations involve the use of spears ....., arrows ....., similar weapons or tools .....

The inventory check-list above emphasizes geometric factors. The visual environment may here, and on the next page, be described in greater detail, with emphasis on similar factors. Additional information and comments will be most helpful. Additional sheets may be inserted in this inventory if necessary. Photographs, drawings, and other materials which will aid in describing the typical visual environment would also be welcome additions to this inventory.

II. SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

1. *Ankole*
   Group designation: Banyankole
   Location: Ankole District, Uganda
   Data collected by: Marshall H. Segall
   N = 344 (180 adults, 164 children)

The Ankole, numbering 500,000 people, are at the margin of the East African cattle area; more specifically, they belong to the interlacustrine group of Bantu peoples. Although they include a small percentage of Bahima (cattle herdsmen who live in round kraals), most Ankole are agriculturalists, today living primarily in mud and wattle rectangular houses. Homesites are widely scattered; compact villages are exceedingly rare. Several roads (one of them hard-topped) traverse the district, and it is becoming common for people to build homes near these roads although many Ankole still live in small clusters of houses, surrounded by plantain groves, built on the slopes of rolling hills. These hills are the most notable feature of the landscape, which is also dotted with papyrus swamps and occasional flat, grassy plains. Vistas may extend for many miles. Horizons are usually hilly.

Small general stores dot the district and make possible a very wide distribution of factory-made textiles, cooking implements, camp stoves, bottled soft-drinks, etc. Elementary schools, housed in mud and wattle rectangular buildings, are numerous.

The administrative center of the district is a small town containing many well-built structures, some multiple-storied. A typical

house in this town is very nearly perfectly rectangular. If its owner is affluent enough, the house will have professionally carpentered window frames and doors and a corrugated tin roof. Furnishings are likely to be of European style. Wooden folding chairs are very common; rectangular tables are the rule. Even minimally educated Ankole are likely to decorate the interior walls of their houses with family photographs or pictures taken from magazines. These pictures are often enclosed in rectangular frames. Spears and walking sticks are common, but arrows are not used. The most widely used type of container is the calabash, but rectangular kerosene "debbies" are commonly employed. Clothing is simple, but usually in the European style. Women's fabrics are often multicolored, and geometric patterns are popular.

Although one would estimate the Ankole to be only "moderately" Europeanized and to be living in a moderately carpentered environment, considerable rectangularity exists.

from The Influence of Culture on Perception by Marshall H. Segall (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1966), Appendix A, pp. 215-218.

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